

HORROR STORIES

FEAST OF BLOOD
For The Girl WHO
COULDN'T DIE!

**THE NIGHT
THE ZOMBIES
WALKED**

APR 60¢ PDC
ORDEAL OF TERROR When We
Faced The **SILENT SPIRIT FROM THE GRAVE**

**REVENGE
FROM
HELL**

THE CURSE OF THE BURNING WITCH



HORROR STORIES

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THE

GHOST

WANTED

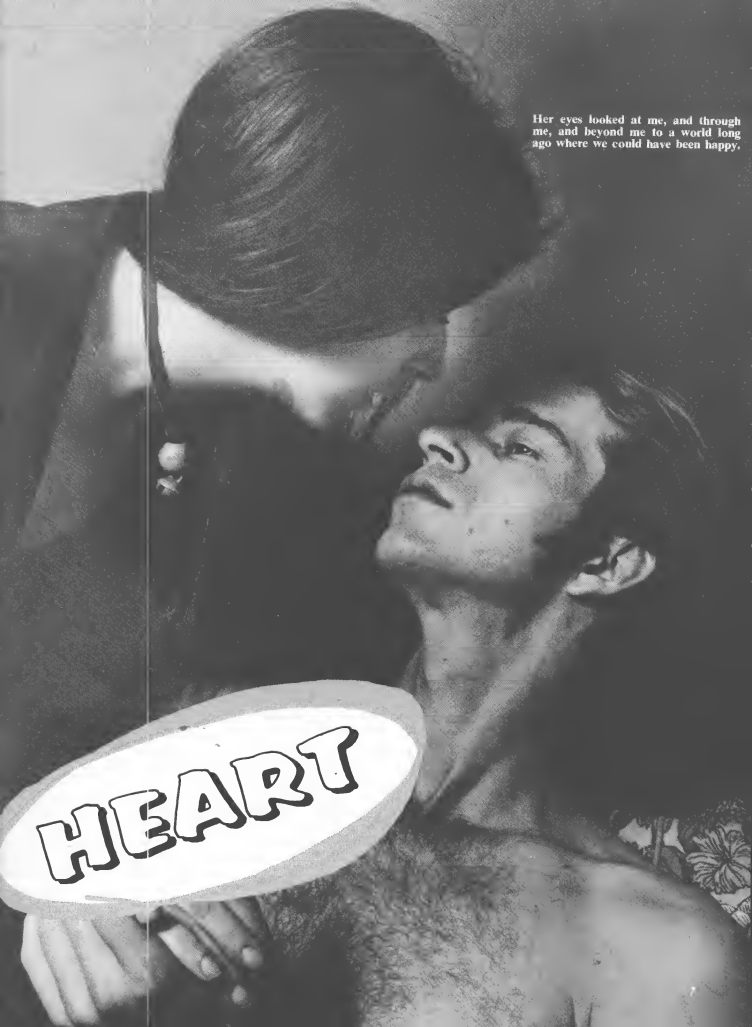
MY

by THOMAS CAMPION

O H MY GOD!" I swerved frantically, but the sickening thud told me I hadn't missed. The car screeched to a halt. My head hit the windshield and for a moment I lay with my face on the steering wheel, momentarily dazed by the impact. I have just killed another human being, cut clearly through my foggy brain. Shaking, groggy, I opened the door. The cold, dead winter air hit me with an almost physical force and brought me back to my senses. The car had stopped on an embankment. I raced back to the road and began searching for the body. It wasn't there!

"This is insane!" I shouted hysterically. Grabbing a flashlight from the glove compartment, I rapidly inspected the piles of damp leaves that lay like blankets piled on either side of the road. But I found nothing.

My mind quickly recalled the events that had happened just a few moments ago. It was night. I was driving down a lonely country road. There were no lights. Ahead, revealed for an instant in the glare of my own headlights a woman came running toward me, her arms out-stretched. Her eyes were focused directly, almost pleadingly, on mine. I tried to stop short, but the road was wet. "I felt the impact!" I yelled out loud. "I hit her!"



Her eyes looked at me, and through
me, and beyond me to a world long
ago where we could have been happy.

HEART

Grabbing hold of my sanity, I began a methodical search of the area, even looking on the fenders for any sign of a dent. Nothing. Not a trace that anything had happened, except for the wild skid marks on the asphalt.

Shaken, I climbed back into the car and drove to the nearest town. Miles before the accident. I had noticed a sign advertising a hotel located near the roadway. Only eight miles to Dusenbergs, it said. I could get help there.

Then, just around the bend, I saw lights coming from a seedy-looking hotel. I headed for it.

Rapidly pulling into the bumpy driveway, I killed the engine and raced to the stairs. I tore open the door and ran to the service desk. I pounded the bell furiously.

"Can I help you?"

I nearly passed out from fright as a figure suddenly appeared behind the counter. I took a deep breath. Obviously the clerk had been looking for something under the desk and just happened to surface when I rang the bell.

"What's up, buddy? You want a room or something?"

"Look, there's been a terrible accident. I've just killed somebody—hit her with my car—but I can't find the body. Are you deaf—I just said I killed somebody!" In my hysteria I was incapable of saying anything else.

"Calm down, friend. Come over here."

He walked around the desk and led me to a couch.

It's odd, but in times of greatest shock, you pay attention to the strangest details. When he sat me down, I noticed the couch was covered in cut velvet and that some of the horsehair was showing through in the worn spots. My hand went out to touch it. The coarse fibres were the only reality in a world suddenly gone mad.

The clerk, a young man with worry lines etched into his forehead, leaned over me. "Breathe deep," he said. "It'll calm you down."

I did as he said.

"Now what happened?"

I repeated my jumbled story. He heard it with no emotion. "Was she wearing a long, black dress?" he asked matter-of-factly.

"This is retarded!" I snapped. "I've just killed somebody and you're hassling about what clothes she wore. Call the police!"

"Was she wearing a black dress," he repeated softly.

"I don't know—yes, she was,

damn it. Would you please call the police!"

"The police won't help," he said, setting his lips into a thin line.

He reached over and picked up the telephone.

"Yes, it's me. A guy just came here and said he hit somebody with his car. A girl in a long, black dress. I thought you'd like to know."

He hung up and turned to me.

"What you need, my friend, is a drink." He went over behind the desk and returned brandishing a bottle and a glass.

"What I need," I corrected him coldly, "is for someone to tell me just what the hell's going on. That girl may need help—she still might be alive."

"You can't help her, mister, because you never hit her. Look," he said, sitting beside me and pouring a stiff drink, "how long have you been driving today?"

"About eight hours."

"I thought so. Here, take this," he shoved the glass into my hand. "You know it's really funny, but that girl gets hit about once a month—and only in winter."

I gagged, and he interrupted himself long enough to give me a hearty slap on the back.

"You OK? Good. Now as I was saying, motorists always think they see her. And I bet I can tell you where—right at that big group of oak trees that comes out nearer to the road than the others. Am I right?"

I nodded weakly. The booze had calmed me down.

"It's just an hallucination—you know, a mirage. Like what the Foreign Legion used to see in the Sahara Desert. Everybody would think he saw the same bunch of camels or water holes or something. One of these days we're going to chop those blasted trees down. Gives the town a bad name. By the way, what's yours and where you headed?"

I gave him my name and said that I was on my way to Hadley. "And as long as I'm at it," I added miserably, "I'm probably lost."

"As a matter of fact, you're not. Hadley is the next town over, just a few miles from here. Thomas Campion, huh? You any relation to old Doc campion?"

"His nephew. I'm going to take over his practice."

"So it's true. I heard rumors that he was going to retire and split to Florida. I'm glad to see somebody around here has any

sense. These winters are murder."

"So why don't you go too?" I asked crossly. My nerves were still on edge from the imagined accident.

"What, and sweat to death somewhere down South? Not on your life. Listen, it's almost midnight and you've had a pretty bad experience. Why don't you stay here for the night and go on tomorrow morning?"

I was exhausted, all emotion drained out of me, so I agreed.

"And there won't be any charge. Dusenbergs doesn't have a doctor, so you'll be seeing a lot of us. Sort of a good-will gesture."

I called Uncle Edvard and told him to expect me on the following day but I didn't tell him the real reason behind my delay. I didn't want him to worry needlessly. Then I followed the talkative hotel clerk up a flight of creaking stairs to a vacant room.

"Hope you'll be comfortable," he grinned, and closed the door.

The combination of a long drive, extreme fright and frustration, and a good belt had made me even more sleepy than I had thought. I almost collapsed on the bed.

I WOKE UP at eleven o'clock the next morning. It was the sort of beautiful day that can only happen in winter. I looked out the window. It was sunny and there was no wind. The trees, their filigree branches penciled delicately against the blue, faraway mountains, created a lovely picture, sombre, but beautiful nevertheless.

I dressed myself and went downstairs. The owners of the hotel greeted me cordially. They invited me to have breakfast, but I declined. I was anxious to see my uncle and to set up practice. One of the few things I had brought with me was my shingle—Thomas Campion, M.D.—the varnish was still a little tacky.

The drive from Dusenbergs to Hadley took less than ten minutes. And five minutes after that, I was warmly shaking hands with my uncle.

"Glad to see you could make it, boy!" he boomed cheerfully. "Last time I saw you, you were a scrawny ten-year-old."

We went into the sunny dining-room and had some breakfast. In between sips of steaming coffee I told him of my night's adventure. "And the funny part of it is, I can still see her eyes, Uncle Edvard. So

(Continued on page 60)



*Kishmo, the great and dread
vowed to spend all eternity
seeking out and destroying the
white devils who had killed him!*

REVENGE

OH WOW—what a lot of garbage this is!" Ellen punctuated this remark by tossing the offending book clear across the room. It landed by Cousin Martha's feet. Martha gave her a resentful glance. Wardlessly, the older girl got up, replaced the book on the shelf and sat down again. Not far an instant did she cease her relentless stare at Ellen.

"Oh, Martha, knock it off, will you? Don't be such a creep. If I had known that stupid book meant so much to you, I wouldn't have heaved it."

"That stupid book", as you call it, dear Cousin Ellen, was written by our great-great grandfather more than a hundred years ago," came the crisp reply. Obviously Martha hadn't been terribly impressed by the sincerity in Ellen's semi-apology. "And I'll thank you to have a little more respect

for the beliefs and traditions others may have."

Ellen canalized an impulse to perform an impolite gesture involving a thumb and her nose directed against this pompous remark, but she realized that Martha had been really offended by her action.

"Hey, I'm sorry, I really am. It's just that I've been here for nearly a week now and I'm bored silly—no offense. Daddy said he'd be here to take me back to school in a few days but I don't know why he's taking so long. Honestly, Martha, how can you stand it? Living in the middle of nowhere and all. This little house in the woods looks like a Walt Disney nightmare or something."

"And I, on the other hand, often wonder how you can live in a hut, dirty city," Martha answered in what she hoped

The wolf-creature glared triumphantly at his captive. There was no escape—now only a merciful end could free the girl from the lifetime of degrading slavery that was sure to follow.



FROM HELL

by OBADIAH KEMPH

passed far a dignified tone of voice. Her cousin irked her continually—so condescending and self-assured. Martha adapted an equally annoying superiority. She knew she was being just as obnoxious and contrary, but she didn't care anymore. In spite of the fact that less than two years separated them chronologically, Martha felt worlds apart from Ellen, and the prospect of spending even a few more days in the company of her snatty cousin wasn't a very pleasant one.

"Let's do something!" Ellen exclaimed suddenly. "Anything at all. I'm game."

"You were reading to me," Martha sulked. "And you stopped just at the good part."

"I wasn't aware that there was one in that dumb book," commented Ellen drily. "However, if you're so excited by it, why don't you read it to me? Maybe my father will come

to the rescue right in the middle of it."

Martha chose to ignore that last statement. She reached over and took down the same volume Ellen had so unceremoniously disposed of, and began reading. It was the product of a "vanity press"—a company that specializes in printing the works of would-be writers, at the authors' expense of course. It turned out to be an amazingly boring history of the area. And when you stop to consider that absolutely nothing had happened in Glenwood Falls for the past hundred and fifty years, and that all this nothing was lavishly detailed by the hand of an unskilled writer, you will begin to understand Ellen's discomfort at hearing her cousin's recitative. Even the "good part" wound up to be not quite exciting.

(Continued on page 36)



"Bring the straw!" someone shouted to the crowd of frightened people. But the mob stood shock-still as the eyes

THE CURSE OF THE BURNING WITCH

An unholy glare lit up the surrounding countryside as howling Powers of Darkness took control of yet another helpless town!

by MICHAEL PRAETORIUS

"KILL HER!"

"Burn her!"

"Drive a stake through her filthy heart! She brings wickedness to our village!"

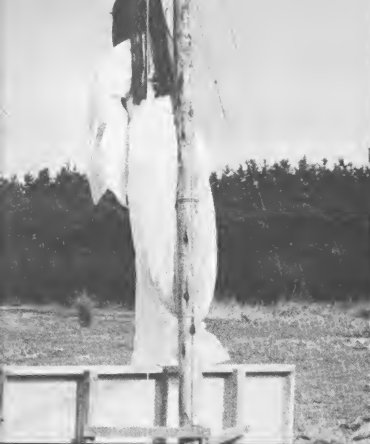
Angry shouts filled the air as the mob surrounded the cowering woman. She tried frantically to escape, to save her own life, but her efforts were useless. In moments she was stripped, dragged naked along the rough pavement, and brutally lashed to a dead tree.

Large piles of dry straw were brought and layed around her torn and bleeding feet. A torch was produced and thrown on the tinder. It exploded into a tall pillar of fire. The hapless woman gave one

final shriek of agony before her body was consumed by the flames. The crowd danced around the burning corpse. Some of the more sensitive ones ran into the bushes to be sick as the stench of frying human flesh invaded their nostrils—but every one of the townspeople reveled in the execution.

Soon the physical presence of the unfortunate woman was nothing but a memory as the hungry flames shot higher and higher into the sky, illuminating the wild features of the triumphant villagers.

"We're free!" someone in the crowd shouted. Quickly the chant was picked up by the others and the low-slung hills echoed with the battle cry. The glowing embers were extinguished with water and



of a half-human thing stared at them and remembered.

the ashes scattered to the four winds. Bottles of saki were carelessly opened, their contents drenching the packed dirt of the street. People danced in a frenzy. Never before had the town witnessed such unrestrained joy and pleasure at its release from bondage.

POLICE COMMISSIONER Sakouri read the bulletin with a deepening frown. He toyed with his silky black moustache as his eyes traveled rapidly down the paper. He tossed it aside and impatiently pressed the buzzer.

"Send Sergeant Takomi in, please. I want to see him."

Moments later, a brisk knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," the seated official said curtly.

"You wanted to see me, boss?" The young man marched into the room and stood expectingly in front of his superior's desk.

"Yes. Read this. And don't call me 'boss'! You've been seeing too many of those American movies. You should have more respect for your elders."

"Sorry, sir. I guess I..." The rest of the sentence trailed off as Takomi read the missive. He looked up, his brows contracted in wonder. "This can't be. We're living in the twentieth century. Stuff like this just doesn't happen anymore."

"Obviously it does, or we wouldn't have gotten the bulletin. An outbreak of superstitious violence, of the most pernicious kind. So far three innocent



people have been murdered by mob justice.' Takomi, I've just received word from reliable sources that the next execution will probably occur in —." He named a small fishing village.

"But that's my home town!" Takomi was startled. "I know everybody there. They're good people. They wouldn't do such a thing!"

Commissioner Sakouri sympathized with the young man's disturbance. He said gently, "Perhaps not. That's why I want you assigned to the case. Since you do know the people involved so well, you'll be able to judge for yourself. Be on the 4:20 train. Here's your reservation. Good luck, son. One more thing," he called as the youth was slowly opening the door to leave, "wear civilian dress. Tell your family you're on holiday. I don't want you to arouse needless suspicion." He smiled, then turned to begin another of his endless duties.

Takomi stood outside the Commissioner's office with a worried frown wrinkling his regular features. How could his people, good, decent folks he had known all his life, suddenly turn into a mob? And what was worse, how could he bring himself to press charges against them? He sighed deeply and left the police station to begin preparations for his unhappy vacation.

Takomi was the youngest sergeant on the entire police force of Tokyo. Commissioner Sakouri constantly upbraided him for the breezy, informal manner he adopted when dealing with people and assignments, but the older man knew that Takomi could be depended up to do the job courageously and quickly.

Takomi crossed the congested street and headed for his small, bachelor apartment. His mind was troubled by uneasy thoughts of home. True, he hadn't been there in almost a year and a half, but certainly people didn't change as radically as that in such a short time. He remembered when his father had been drowned while fishing for tuna. The whole town saw to it that Takomi, his sister and his mother were taken care of. In fact, it was through their unselfish generosity that Akau could go to teachers college and that he was sent to the police academy.

"It just doesn't make any sense," he muttered to himself as he climbed the flight of stairs to his place. The dull void in his heart was growing bigger and bigger by

the moment. His village, his own people—it couldn't be possible.

TAKOMI stepped off the train and stood stretching his cramped muscles gratefully on the deserted platform. He picked up his suitcase and began walking the well-remembered streets to his mother's house. He hadn't told anyone he was coming. The usually short walk took a while, however, because he was stopped by friendly faces at almost every doorway.

"They're so glad to see me," he thought bitterly to himself. But he answered with lighthearted quips all their kindly inquiries about his health, his job, his future.

Everything seemed perfectly normal; not much had changed since he had last seen the village. He paused for a moment before his mother's door. He wondered what he would say to her. She could always tell when he wasn't being truthful. She said his ears turned bright red. Takomi took a comb from his pocket and tried to cover them with his straight, blue-black hair. He took a deep breath and entered the house.

"Mama-san!"

His mother turned with a strangled gasp of joy and ran to him. He hugged her and lifted her frail body until the neat little braided bun, now only beginning to streak with grey, nearly touched the white paper ceiling.

He put her down gently and they stood looking at each other without speaking. His mother's quick, limpid eyes were beginning to fill with tears of happiness.

"You look well, my son."

"And so do you, Mama-san." Takomi spoke brightly, but felt his heart clutch. As he watched his mother bustle about seeing to the preparations for his unexpected homecoming, he could see the change. Those fine lines in her face had deepened, broadened. She looked older, more tired, as if laboring under a great tension.

"Takomi!" His sister Akau, just returned from school, dropped her books and ran to greet him. He warmly embraced her. He was very fond of his sister and was proud that she had become a teacher. But as she joined their mother in baking the feast, he noticed that she, too, was haggard. And there was a strange, almost haunted expression in her eyes.

If Takomi couldn't lie to his mother, it was doubly impossible to keep anything from his sister. Late in the evening when Mama-san

had retired for the night, she sat down beside him.

She looked at him for a moment, then said simply, "Why have you come?"

Takomi knew it was useless not to tell the truth to her. He admitted his real reason for the homecoming. "But I hope and pray that I am wrong."

"You aren't," she replied softly. "You know these people as well as I do. And you also know that they wouldn't even think of violence. But, Takomi," her voice shook with emotion, "things are happening. Weird, uncanny things. Fires break out for no reason; the tide goes back twenty feet farther from the shore; late at night strange noises fill the air. It's getting so that even I am beginning to believe that there are witches. Takomi, the people are frightened. They don't know what to do. There's an old woman—you remember her, Harlu. They say she is in league with evil spirits and that she's the one responsible. I know it sounds silly and childish, like being afraid of the dark, but what other explanation is there? Takomi, I am frightened." She began to sob.

Takomi put his arms around his sister to comfort her. He had great faith in Akau's judgment. He knew she wouldn't stoop to mere superstition, and if she said something was green, then green it was. Obviously something was going on in the village to terrify the people so.

"What can we do?" he asked.

"I don't know," she said, wiping her eyes on the flowing sleeves of her house kimono. "There's talk of burning Harlu at the stake. But don't you see, Takomi—they've got to blame *someone* for what's happening. It's human nature."

"Human nature or not, an innocent person's life may hang in jeopardy. I think tonight I'll pay a visit on Harlu."

"I'll go with you," said Akau, as she went to her room to put on street clothes.

EVEN as children, they were always sure that the old woman was more than half insane. And they had been petrified of her. A widow, she lived alone in a rundown hut right near the shoreline. She earned a living by repairing nets, which she did with amazing skill. Harlu also supplemented her income by concocting special herb teas that had wonderful healing properties. Financially, she had no complaints. But as far as social

(Continued on page 52)

The NIGHT The ZOMBIES WALKED

Deep within the great jungle dwelt a race of things—moving in darkness, reeking of death, having no pity in their hearts!

by GEOFFREY JACK

“MANUEL, do you have the guns?”
“*Si, mi capitán, están allí.* They are waiting at the depot. Our men will pick them up late at night when no one will see them.”

“*Bueno.* Follow me.”

The two figures slunk into an alley, turned the corner, and went on the street. They assumed the character of pedestrians idly ambling by to see the few sights Cristobal had to offer. It was a relatively small town, tucked deep within the mountains, and under normal conditions, anyone wandering about would be sure to arouse suspicion. But these weren't normal times. The insecure government had just set up one of its own men as *alcalde*, mayor, and had imported lackeys from the city to fill all the minor offices. The entire town was in a flux as each citizen worried what would happen next.

Manuel and his leader, Don Filipe Gongoras, were part of a small but tightly-organized band of revolutionaries who were violently opposed to the existing regime. Their members were recruited

"Guns are useless," one of the revolutionaries said. "I have seen these—these undead. No bullet will put an end to them."



mostly from the back country, mestizos and full-blooded Indians who had long felt the cruel and biting lash common to all downtrodden masses. Don Filipe was probably just as corrupt and unfeeling, but to his men he represented a change. And to an oppressed people, even a few crumbs of freedom and dignity are welcome.

Filipe, with Manuel in tow, crossed the small, sun-drenched plaza and headed for the latter's hacienda located a few miles southwest of the town. Ordinarily Filipe would ride one of his stallions, but he enjoyed playing revolutionary. And part of his role was to be one of the *campesinos*, the common people, who certainly could not afford the luxury of owning a horse.

The year was 1819. All of South America was under turmoil. The lazy and incompetent Spanish noblemen who comprised the puppet government had finally overstepped their bounds with high taxes piled on higher ones and laws that restricted even the most basic human rights. Unselfish, dedicated men like Bernardo O'Higgins, Bolivar, San Martin, da Costa Cabral followed the example of Mexico's brave Padre Hidalgo and began the difficult, dangerous and often heart-breaking task of winning self-government for all people.

Filipe was attending the University of Madrid when the trouble broke out. He had fallen into the company of rich, young, would-be radicals. From two thousand miles away, the troubles of the poor people living in his own district began having a romantic glow for the youth. After taking two more courses on the theory behind government, Don Filipe decided that he would lead his peasants to victory.

He left the university and sailed back home. By this time his father had died and he had reached his majority. The care and overseeing of the large estate was in his hands now. He organized his workers into fighters. He even convinced himself that he was sincere in his beliefs of self-government. Filipe's new hobby took up most of his time.

As the son of one of the several noble families living in Cristobel, he was naturally unsuspect of radical leanings. Outwardly his life changed little—daily mass in the cathedral, office duties, flirting with all the proper girls in the area—and no one outside his small band of revolutionaries knew of his

double life.

Except for one person. His nurse.

After his wife had died giving birth to Filipe, Don Fredrico went in search of a woman to care for the infant. But it was difficult because the old man did not want a village woman. He had led a dissolute life—drinking, wenching, cheating, gambling—that had continued long after he married. Don Fredrico desired a fresh start for himself, wanted the infant brought up by someone who knew little or nothing about the sins of his father. He looked far and wide, and finally made his choice in the person of a full-blooded Indian who had spent most of her life living in the jungle. Vandra was proud, stately as only a native woman can be. Fairly old when Fredrico hired her, she grew to an ancient age despising the father but loving the son.

She quickly realized, with the non-verbal intuition some people have, what Filipe was about. She could see the shallowness of his desires and ideals. Self-government—yes, but led by responsible people who wanted all others to be free. But even though she had raised him, she was still a servant. And now that her young charge had reached manhood, she kept her thoughts and fears locked even deeper within her heart.

PILIBE had ordered a shipment of guns from a place called Ilion, New York. He had no idea of where it was, only vaguely pointing north when one of his lieutenants had questioned him on it. Somebody named Remington had just opened up an arms factory and Filipe jumped at the chance to secure weapons. Now his men could be armed just like all the other packets of revolutionaries he was always hearing about.

Manuel, Filipe's henchman, had been Don Fredrico's head overseer. A short, fat man who wheezed constantly, he complemented Filipe's cool, slender elegance. Perhaps that was his only function, for he was too bumbling and nervous to make a decent revolutionary.

Evening found the small band of mis-matched men milling around the deserted depot. Since they were trying to appear at ease, they stood out all the more. But luckily no one was in sight.

Don Filipe came riding up on a magnificent black horse. He liked to impress his followers from time to time with his nobility. It made them behave.

"Vengan," he hissed. "Load the crates on the wagon." He pointed with a manicured finger to the hock cart Manuel was driving. He stopped the two mules in front of the station, and the work began.

Half an hour later, Filipe and his army weaved their way through the jungle to the hacienda. They had an important meeting to conduct on a matter of gravest importance. Several days ago Filipe had gone to a meeting of other local revolutionaries. He discovered that his group was the weakest, smallest, least armed of all. He was hurt. His pride depended on his being the best commander of the most organized, biggest, bravest company of fighters.

"Men," he began as everyone was seated in the small out building used for headquarters, "we need more recruits for our battle of freedom. And idea has just occurred to me—we have strong, able-bodied women at home. We shall bring them into the movement. Wait," he snapped, hearing low murmurs of protest from the men assembled in front of him. "This is war. We need all the fighters we can get. Nobody must be overlooked. And we'll have to step up our rifle practice from three to five times a week."

"Pardoneme, *senor*," came a meek voice from the rear of the room.

"*Quien es?* Who dares to interrupt me? Garcia—what do you want?"

"I do not wish to leave my *familia* alone at night. *Por favor*—couldn't we fire the guns during the day?"

"Don't be a fool, Garcia! Impossible. Besides, your family is perfectly safe."

"No, *mi capitán*. I have relatives who live in the mountains. They tell me of strange things seen at night. Of things that walk in the dark of the moon. Of creatures that..."

"That are creations of your own ignorance, Garcia," came the gruff retort. "Listen all of you. We want freedom from the government. But we also want liberty from superstition. And that includes your mountain creatures!" he snapped at the unhappy peasant who cowered from fear at his leader's displeasure.

"But, *Capitan*," Garcia swallowed loudly and continued in a shaking voice, "already people have been murdered by these—things."

(Continued on page 41)

The six mangled corpses made no sense until someone whispered the dread word—"Vampire!"

FEAST OF BLOOD FOR THE GIRL WHO COULDN'T DIE


by MARTHA SCOTT

ENID'S high heels clicked briskly on the pavement as she strode to work. The noise pleased her—so quick and efficient. She paused for a moment to gaze at her reflection in a store window. Trim, tailored, organized from her neat shoes right up to her modish hat, she was a perfect picture of a woman executive on her way up. She gave a pat to her hairdo then continued her way. Some people complained that she was cold-blooded. Enid smiled to herself. Maybe she was, but if a little ruthlessness was needed to get ahead in this miserable world, she had it, and more to spare besides.

Enid Winter's Advertising Agency—the name pleased her. There was something almost regal, almost commanding about it. The words just seemed to flow together like a navigatable but still turbulent river.

Enid was head of her own company and by sheer weight of her dynamic personality managed to wedge herself into a world generally dominated by men. Advertising can be a cruel and heartless occupation, but Enid found it exciting. And as she was totally devoid of sentimentality, she encouraged the dog eat dog atmosphere that existed even within her own office.

She entered the Madison Avenue building and pushed the button for the elevator that would send her shooting up to the fifteenth floor. While she was waiting she took another look at herself in



She ripped an arm off the unlucky victim to make certain that not a single drop of that precious life fluid had escaped the savage fury of her foul and gore-clotted fangs.



The blood-leech raised her hands. Almost blind with desire for that warm, faintly salty liquid, she hissed and began to approach the sole two witnesses.

the mirror. Excellent—competent with just a hint of fake feminine helplessness. That should appeal to her masculine clients.

The elevator opened its door and she got in. Less than a minute later she walked into her executive suite.

"Come on, girls—coffee break's over," she called testily to the bevy of secretaries clustered around the morning newspaper.

She watched with a certain amount of pride as the young women quickly scurried away to their own desks. That was how to handle people. Be firm, unbending and you'll get results.

"Any calls for me, Hawkins?"

"Just one, Miss Winters. From Jim Waltars." The overworked Hawkins nervously shoved a strand of dead brown hair from her worry-lined forehead. "He said it was important and you're to return the call. Other than that, it's been a pretty quiet morning."

"Bad sign. We should be so busy that we don't have time to sit. And by the way, what were those giggling fools looking at?"

"Oh, Miss Winters," Hawkins' owlish eyes grew even bigger, "another body's been found. And just like the others, all the blood was drained from it." She practically whispered the last phrase.

"You mean to tell me you allowed those babbling idiots to waste precious work hours reading nonsense in the papers? One more deal like that, Hawkins, and you're fired!"

"But it's not nonsense, Miss Winters. Not at all. In less than seven weeks, five bodies have been discovered. You should read the story in the paper."

"I only read the financial section, Hawkins. Haven't time to waste looking at garbage foolish writers create just to sell papers. These stories are a pack of lies. Is that clear, Hawkins? Call Waltars and tell him to come here to see me. And order me some coffee," she snapped as Hawkins trotted out the door.

A while later Jim Waltars arrived.

"Come in, Mr. Waltars," Enid's voice dripped honey. "I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting but I've been ever so busy with accounts and things that I just don't know where the time has flown."

"I haven't been waiting long at all, Miss Winters," came Waltars' equally phoney reply. "And besides, looking at you I can see it was worth the wait."

You hate my guts, you coward, thought Enid. She smiled and said, "Since it's so near lunch time, let's go out together, shall we?"

THEY FOUND a small, uncrowded restaurant and began the depressing act of disguising ruthless business under a thin facade of friendly good cheer. They had just brought the negotiations to a close when Walters said, "Have another cocktail, Miss Winters."

"Oh, I couldn't, Mr. Walters. I've had two already."

"You've had three, but who's counting?"

"Well, if you insist, just one more then."

As she sipped her drink she looked at Jim. Funny, she thought to herself, she never realized how blue Walters' eyes were.

"It's getting late and I really have to get back to the office—oops!" Enid nearly fell on the floor. Several of the customers looked at her and grinned.

"Oh no," she half-wailed, "I'm drunk. Just like a silly high school girl. I'm plastered. I can't go back to the office like this. I've never gotten tight on a business lunch before, Mr. Walters—you've got to believe me."

"I do, Enid—you don't mind if I call you by your first name, do you? No? Fine. I'm a little bombed myself, if you must know. I guess it took us longer to close the account than either of us realized. So it really isn't our fault."

"That's just swell—now what are we both going to do?"

"We can take a cab to my place, that's what! It's not far. We'll be able to sober up and I'll take you back to your office in no time. And if I do say so myself, I make fantastic coffee."

Enid agreed and the pair of them made the difficult journey to the street, and by sheer luck managed to hail a cab in a matter of minutes.

They climbed in and fell back against the seat. Walters gave the driver the address. The taxi started up and they were on their way to the fashionable neighborhood Jim lived in.

A while later, Walters pointed out the window, "Look, Enid, there's where they found the latest victim—over there by those bushes."

"What victim—oh, you mean that vampire business? Well, do you want to know what I think..." and she gave Jim the

same tirade she had barked at Hawkins, only in a more subdued voice.

"It's funny you said that, Enid, because the same thing also occurred to me. Maybe it is just a publicity stunt to get people to subscribe to the papers. As far as I know, nobody has seen any of the bodies. A friend of mine works in a hospital right nearby. It would seem logical that the cops would take the corpses to the nearest hospital, but they haven't. Well, here we are."

The taxi pulled up in front of a luxury apartment building. It was odd, but for a man as drunk as Walters claimed to be, he was remarkably agile in hopping out of the cab, helping Enid get out, paying the driver and escorting the stricken female executive to the elevator.

Once they were in his apartment, his self control was even more pronounced as he expertly mixed two more drinks and cleverly steered the conversation around to lighter matters. A perfect host, he did all that was in his power to make Enid feel relaxed and happy in her new surroundings.

What happened next was all too obvious. They wound up in bed together. Jim Walters was quite a lover, as even cold-blooded Enid had to admit, and no one could blame him after his fourth victory if he fell into a light slumber.

It was late afternoon, almost merging into twilight, when his light snores became deep and regular. Enid looked at the sleeping form of the male beside her and smiled that secret smile she kept only for special occasions.

Getting up and putting on Jim's dressing gown, she walked to the window. The sun was beginning to set and the heavy, amber light was slowly fanning the buildings and gilding even the meanest of them until it shone like gold.

She closed the curtain just as the last rays were swept behind the far-off Palisades. It was time. Enid walked back to the bed and looked once more at Jim. Then she attacked.

Jim gasped and opened his eyes to see a hideous form once more descend on him. He yelled and tried to fend off the yellow fangs that went right for his throat. It was impossible to stop a thing that felt neither pain nor pity. He struggled briefly, but in moments stopped his efforts as blackness

swelled around him.

Enid sucked, lapped, drank until not a drop of blood was left in the young man's body. She tore off an arm just to be certain that in her greed not a precious bit of life fluid had eluded her teeth.

This had been an easy one. The others in the park had been—well, messy to say the least. They were also more dangerous. She knew that Hawkins would give her the necessary alibi, Enid had been drunk. Probably a dozen people would vouch for that. She had sobered up and left Jim's apartment. That was all. She had no idea who or what could have done such a ghastly, sickening murder. Perfect.

After human blood once again was incorporated into her system, she would be able to go out into the world once more. Even now she could feel her beauty returning. Her hair was beginning to grow back and those terrible scars would be disappearing in a few moments.

No, Enid was not always a human leech. As a child she had been bitten, but not killed, by a vampire. Enid's father thought he could save her from a horrible fate by sending her out of the country. People, food, even the very air of the old country lived and breathed lingering un-death. Enid was sent to school in France and later on came to New York to set up business. She changed her unpronounceable, Slavic last name to "Winters" and became an American citizen. But it was all useless. By a mere switch of nationalities and cultures she was no more able to halt the dread transformation in her body than if she had stayed in her native land. The change of climate had helped to postpone her affliction but there was nothing either human or supernatural that could end it.

She dressed herself and paused for a second in front of the mirror. No one could possibly guess her secret.

LIZA HAWKINS gagged on her toast the following morning as the screaming black print of the headlines roared at her: "SIXTH VICTIM FOR THE BLOOD SUCKER!"

Hawkins couldn't control the tremble in her fingers as she opened the paper and read the article. "Christ, no—it's Jim Walters!"

She felt tears of impotent rage
(Continued on page 33)

SCREAMING HORROR OF THE Devil's Spawn

by JAMES FORRESTER

*In a fraction of a second, a
black pit yawned in front of me.
Evil laughter filled my ears—
as I was dragged to the brink!*

DIANE LAY ON the floor writing in a series of violent convulsions. Her usually lovely face was contorted into an evil, feral mask. A stream of foul curses and obscene blasphemies poured from her foam-flecked lips in a staccato-like scream. Her thin, silk gown had been torn to shreds and the ragged tatters were parted to expose the soft fullness of her white body. Her hands seemed to be moving of their own volition, fingers and her fingernails, tearing and raking at her shoulders, throat and heaving, bare breasts. I stared down at her in helpless horror. My brain reeled and my blood froze as I watched this final, utter degradation of the woman I loved! I made a sudden move toward her; Conrad Lorentz grasped my shoulder and pulled me back.



"It would be extremely dangerous to touch her," he murmured in his sneering voice. "It will be an hour—perhaps two—before she will return to what you would call a normal state . . ."

"You rotten bastard!" I snarled. "I ought to kill you, Lorentz . . ."

"But you won't," he rasped. "You won't do a thing."

I was silent. He was absolutely right. I wouldn't do anything to him. I could not—I dared not. Lorentz spoke again.

"Perhaps you won't be so ready to scoff at us from now on, Mr. Forrester," he leered. "You will not be so quick to call us crack-pots and phonies in the future—will you?"

"No," I groaned, utterly defeated. "You win, Lorentz—all around . . ."

"We'd better leave Miss Simmons alone for the time being," he said. "She's really enjoying herself. An outsider like you can't possibly imagine what wonderful images and visions she's having. But enough of that. Come along with me . . ."

I followed him like a helpless idiot. Lorentz led me into his private office—a room draped with dark velvet hangings and decorated with all the trappings and paraphernalia one would expect to find in the office of a cult-leader. There were ugly, even hideous idols on pedestals, cases filled with books on magic and witchcraft, occult and astrological symbols everywhere in the room. The air was heavy with the stink of some heavy, cloying incense which rose in clouds from a smoldering brazier by the door.

"Sit down," Conrad Lorentz said. It was an order rather than an invitation. "I think you'd better wait in here—where I can keep an eye on you."

I obeyed. There was nothing else I could do. Whatever happened afterwards, right now my main obsession was to get Diane out of there—and to do that, I would have to play along with Conrad Lorentz, much as I loathed and detested the man.

I'd had nothing but scoffing contempt for him at first—for him, for the dizzy "high priests and priestesses," and for the other half-baked followers of his weird cult.

I had considered Conrad Lorentz a fake and a fraud—a money-hungry voluptuary, a satyr who used his cult as nothing but a source of profit and orgiastic plea-



THE TAROT DECK:

"Tarot" means "That which was; That which is; That which shall be." Tarot is that mysterious SOMETHING which exists in a dimension apart from everyday life. This SOMETHING exists before Man was created, and it will exist in eternity.

Tarot is actually a secret book disguised as a pack of cards. 56 of the total of 78 cards are called minor trumps. These are divided into four suits representing the four elements or "states" of the world. These four suits are given different names than ordinary playing cards but correspond in some ways. They are: Wands (clubs), Cups (hearts), Swords (spades), and Pentacles (diamonds). In order, they stand for Fire, Water,



Air, Earth. The most important Tarot cards are the 22 major trumps. These are picture cards and are numbered from zero to twenty-one. Each major trump has a special title and meaning according to each suit being played.

"The Hanged Man" means "suspended mind" because "man" and "mind" come from the same Sanskrit word. The Hanged Man refers to the terror of the supernatural and Man's powerlessness to resist it. When the Hanged Man is drawn, it means that unearthly forces have taken control of the player's life—that something strange is about to happen—and there is nothing he can do about it . . . It is the supremacy of the supernatural, the inevitability of the unknown.



sure. I hadn't changed my mind about any of that—but I had been forced to admit that the man did have some strange power. I'd seen enough evidence of that in the form of phenomena I could not possibly explain.

I knew that both Diane and I were powerless against Lorentz. Who would listen to me if I complained? And, even if someone would listen, I—God help me—was terrified of what Lorentz could do to both of us in revenge!

"Well, Forrester, what do you intend doing now?" the cultist asked when he'd seated himself behind the ornately-carved Chinese table he used as a desk. He was completely at his ease, absolutely sure of himself.

"I want to take Diane home," I said, feeling a cold shudder rip along my spine. "I want to get her away from here."

"You'll be free to do so, as soon as she 'comes back,'" Lorentz smirked. "She's rather far away at present—in a cataleptic state about which you understand nothing. You may take her anywhere you wish after she returns to what you'd call a 'normal' state. I warn you, though, that she'll want to come back—that she'll insist on coming back to us afterwards . . ."

"I'll risk that!" I snapped. Lorentz only chuckled. I changed my tactics. "Look," I began, pleading with him, "why don't you break this hypnotic spell or whatever you use on your vic—on your followers—that you have on Diane. I'll pay you . . ."

Lorentz waved off that one with an impatient gesture of contempt.

"Diane Simmons has more money than you do, Forrester," he declared coldly. "Besides, she is a very attractive young woman. I want her—and I intend having her. I also intend getting as much of her money as possible."

"That's outright robbery! You could be sent to prison," I told him. "You could be . . ."

"Oh, stop!" he snorted, cutting me off in mid-sentence. "I've been operating the Circle of Selena for nearly fifteen years. I've never even been arrested. The few people who have tried to make trouble for me have regretted it."

I was sick at heart, revolted. I didn't have the slightest doubt that everything he said was true. Conrad Lorentz had been operating in Southern California for a long time. His cult, "The Circle of Selena" had (Continued on page 46)

WE FACED THE SILENT SPIRIT FROM THE GRAVE

*For more than fifty years my job has been to investigate
psychic happenings. But never in my life have I ever faced
anything so terrifying as the spectre
stalking the halls of Breakwood Manor!*

by GABRIEL VARNEY

"O H, PLEASE, Mr. Varney," the young girl begged, tears filling her crystal eyes, "you've got to help us. I can't live in that house a minute longer. And now with Mother sick and all, I..." She collapsed in a fit of weeping.

"It's all right, Miss Rogers," I said, patting her arm. "I'll take the assignment. I'll be over at Breakwood Manor sometime early tomorrow morning. Now you go and get some rest. After what you've been through, you deserve it."

The plucky girl smiled and left the office. I went over to the water cooler and took one of those pills that young fool of a doctor had given me. High blood pressure—too old to practise? Ha! I'm 72 years old and feel like a boy of twenty. They all wanted me to retire



Chris screamed and tore herself from Bob's strong hands. She ran, and before any of us could stop her, raced into the great hall—the most dangerous part of the whole house.



ten years ago and I did—almost. But when a juicy case like this Breakwood thing comes along, Her Majesty's Guards couldn't hold me back.

I went to my files. "Hmmm, wonder if I have anything on the old house." I talk to myself when I'm alone. People say I do because I'm getting senile. I say it's because there's no one else I'd rather talk to.

I've been a private detective for fifty-four years and it's been nearly a half century since I began to specialize. Even now there are very few men in my field. And what is my specialty, you ask. It's simple—I am a ghost hunter. People come to me with all kinds of problems usually related to supernatural disturbances. I solve them with careful investigation. Generally the cause of these psychic manifestations lies in leaky drains and flapping shutters, but there have been several cases where actual spirits have been sighted. These are the ones that interest me the most, and the occurrences at the Manor seem to point to ghosts for their origin.

I did have something on Breakwood Manor, a newspaper clipping dated 17 August 1904. The house had just been let into the hands of new owners. While in the midst of some renovations, they came across the grave of a child who apparently had died during the reign of Elizabeth I. The tiny corpse was wrapped in lead foil, and from the remains of her costume, was obviously of noble blood. That was all the article said, but at least it gave me something tangible to work from.

The next morning I drove the fifty miles from London to Breakwood Manor. Located in the middle of an over-grown park, the house was an imposing structure. Part of the building was Norman and the rest was Tudor, with some classical trim that could date only from the eighteenth century. But it all seemed to fit, and the image it created was one of grace and comfort. Definitely not the terror-ridden mansion I was led to expect.

Chris Rogers was standing by the gate as I approached. She hopped into my car and we drove down the stately avenue to the house.

"You've got a lovely place here, Miss Rogers. And unless I am very much mistaken, those cedars on either side of the road are three hundred years old."

"You're right, Mr. Varney, and please call me Chris. I'm sorry

about what happened yesterday. Usually I'm not such a baby, but so much is going on. Most of the servants have left and I'm at my wit's end trying to think of excuses for Mother. She's too ill to be told what is going on. Look, there's Bob on the veranda." She waved to a tall figure sitting on a balustrade. He waved back vigorously and jumping down, started running towards us.

I stopped the car at the entrance and we both got out.

"Mr. Varney, this is Bob Tompkins, my fiancé. Bob, this is the famous Gabriel Varney."

"Not as famous as lucky, my dear. Glad to meet you, Bob. Now tell me what is going on. Your girl wasn't terribly specific."

"Not until you've had your tea," said Chris as she took my arm. The two of them escorted me to the drawing room. Chris rang the bell for tea and while we were waiting, the young people began their strange story.

"Let me tell it, honey," Bob said in a distinctly American accent. "Chris' grandparents got this place years ago and up until a few months ago everything was fine. Chris' father was an American and before he died, he sent her to the States to go to school. That's where I met her," he turned to hold her hand. "We graduated and decided to be married. I was offered a job near London and everything was turning out perfectly."

"I hadn't been home for nearly four years," Chris cut in. "And when I walked into the main hall, I knew something was wrong—dreadfully wrong. The servants were so cold and frightened. And I noticed they kept the lights burning all night. John, the head man, took me aside and told me not to mention anything to Mother, but that something ghostly was happening. I said he was being silly. But that very night I heard it. And I saw it!"

"Saw what, Chris?" I asked gently.

"The ghost—the child's ghost. It—it was horrible!"

Luckily the tea arrived at that moment and Chris composed herself to pour it.

Later on I was taken upstairs to meet Mrs. Rogers.

"What did you say your name was—Varlet?" The elderly woman cupped her hand to her ear. "And what are you going in my house?"

"Mother," Chris sat on the bed and placed her arm across the older woman's shoulders, "Mr.

Varney is from the insurance company." Her eyes glanced pleadingly up to mine.

"Quite right, Mrs. Rogers. I am here to do a re-appraisal of your house and its contents. I promise I won't disturb you in the least."

"Well, see that you don't," she snapped crossly. "I don't want anyone snooping around. Hand me my knitting, child, then all of you leave."

We single-filed out of the sick room and stood in the hall. Even though I was probably much older than Mrs. Rogers, she had the ability to make me feel like a naughty schoolboy. Bob noticed my crestfallen appearance and laughed.

"Makes you feel like you just got caught stealing cookies, huh, Mr. Varney? Don't worry, you'll get over it soon. She's really a very nice woman—deep down. Come on, let me show you the rest of the house."

We had an hour tour of the place and then stopped for lunch. A while later I asked to see where the ancient corpse had been found.

"How could you possibly know about that?" Chris asked amazed.

"I've done my homework, my dear," I answered mysteriously. Call it vanity, but I do like to keep my clients guessing. And there is nothing exciting about a well-organized file cabinet!

We went down into the vaults.

"When my grandfather had the house lowered to accommodate a new drainage system, he found the body here," Chris said as she pointed to a slight indentation in the dank earth. "We assumed the child was a Barlette and had her buried in the churchyard across from the other end of the house. The Barlettes were an ancient family who finally died out. My mother's mother was related to them in some way and that is how we got the house. Grandfather paid all the back taxes on the estate and then moved in."

Next I asked to be shown the library. It was located at the opposite end of the mansion. A dreary enough room. It contained hundreds of volumes and looked as if it hadn't been entered in years.

"My grandfather had another library built and that is the one we use," Chris explained. "Most of these books come from the Barlette's. Someday I'm going to go through them—they look interesting."

"Well, I am going through them right now. Here," I said, handing Bob the keys to my car, "take Chris

on a nice ride. Both of you could use a day off. I'll be here to hold the fort, as you Americans say."

They left and I sat down to work. What goes behind the scenes of ghost-hunting is far from the glamorous occupation. It is believed to be. Most of it is just plain hard work, careful attention to detail that requires a great deal of patience.

It was nearly nightfall before I finally found what I was looking for. I put it into my pocket and went to find a lavatory where I could wash off several centuries' worth of grime from my hands. Then I joined the others in the main dining room.

"**W**HAT-ARE you still here, Varlet? I thought you'd be finished hours ago. In my day, people would have the common decency to leave a person alone. Wait a minute," Mrs. Rogers said suspiciously, "now that I recall, we have no insurance. Christine, what is this man doing here? Out with it! I may be an old hag, but I am not a stupid one."

"You're neither old nor a hag, Mrs. Rogers," I said placatingly. "I am here because your daughter asked me to come. The truth of the matter is, you've got a ghost and my job is to find what it is and how to release it."

"A ghost? Here? Varlet, you're either a joker or a madman."

"Now, Mother," Chris said soothingly, "calm yourself and finish your soup."

"Well, as long as you're here, you may as well join us," said Mrs. Rogers with a not ungracious wave of her hand. "This ghost business sounds rather interesting. Tell me what you think it is." She folded her hand and stared at me.

I sat down. After a slight pause, I said, "To tell you the truth, I'm still not entirely sure. But one thing I can tell you—tonight is going to be very important. By the way, Mrs. Rogers, have you ever heard the name Alice Barlette?"

"Alice Barlette? No, I—no, wait. Come to think of it, I have. Something I overheard once as a child. But I can't remember anything else."

"Before this night is through, you will remember, and you'll learn a lot more besides. And that goes for the pair of you over there too. But I want you all to remember one thing: what will happen tonight is a dream, an illusion. It's not real and it cannot harm you in any way. The real danger of spirits

lies in the fear they create. It is this fear that drives mortals to do harm to themselves. A ghost never has and never will hurt a human being. Any bad consequences are self-inflicted by the person who sees the ghost. It is vital that all three of you keep this foremost in your minds."

There was a dead silence in the room, broken only by the steady tick-tock of the ancient clock in the corner of the great hall.

Finally Bob cleared his throat. "Then there is a ghost, Mr. Varney. But how can you be certain? What proof do you have?"

"None, Bob. But all signs point to the existence of a trapped spirit."

"The child, I suppose," put in Chris quietly.

"Yes, but there is also another agent involved. Bob, after dinner, have the servants get us some shovels. Chris, I want you to stay with your mother tonight. You are all going to go through a harrowing experience and I want you to prepare yourselves for a shock. I don't mean to alarm you needlessly, but I think it is fairer to warn you ahead of time."

Dinner being over, we retired to the drawing room. Bob and Mrs. Rogers began a half-hearted game of cards. Chris played some Clementi sonatas for me on the piano. Time hung heavily on our hands.

Finally at eleven o'clock I suggested that Chris take her mother upstairs. Bob went with me to inspect the equipment, then we joined the ladies in the older woman's room.

Chris and her mother were sitting side by side on the bed, their faces drawn, pale as they waited for the unknown to happen. The four of us felt the strain as the minutes ticked slowly by with frighteningly regularity.

"**I**CAN'T stand it any longer!" Chris screamed suddenly.

She ran from the rest of us down the corridor and into the hall. In a second Bob bounded after her. He caught Chris just as she approached the great hall. Putting his arms around the hysterical girl, he tried to calm her.

From where Mrs. Rogers and I were seated we could hear that Bob was having no success at soothing Chris' flayed nerves.

"Go to my daughter, Varlet," Mrs. Rogers said in a faint voice. "She needs you right now more than I do. I'll be fine by myself."

I didn't want to leave the coura-

geous woman alone, but I knew Bob wouldn't be able to handle Chris' hysteria. Promising to return as quickly as possible, I hurried out of the room.

I helped Bob half help the near-unconscious Chris to the foot of the stairs. We got a decanter of brandy from the sideboard and began spooning the burning liquid down Chris' throat. Her eyes fluttered, then opened. She moaned, "I don't..."

"Help—for God's sake, help me!" came the frantic voice of Mrs. Rogers. Bob and I raced up the stairs.

The screams came again, then stopped. We burst through the door to find her in a dead faint.

Chris had roused herself and came to the aid of her mother.

"I saw it," Mrs. Rogers' voice quivered with terror. "It came at me and raised its arms and... oh God!"

Chris flung her arms about her mother.

"What, Mrs. Rogers. What did you see? It is vital that we know. Pull yourself together, woman!" My words were sharp but they had the desired effect. In seconds, Mrs. Rogers was coherent.

"The ghost of the child, Varlet," came the weak reply. "She was dressed in old-fashioned clothing. She passed through the small door over there. I was paralyzed by fear. She stood looking for something in the corner, then turned to me. I think she was trying to say something—but then I blacked out. Chris, for God's sake don't leave me!"

"Bob, where does that door lead to?"

"That's the thing, Mr. Varney. It doesn't lead anywhere. The passageway was blocked off hundreds of years ago."

I had Chris take the stricken woman to her own room. Bob went down and brought pixaxes. After a few practice swings we began knocking down the ancient wall.

Once freed of its barricade, the door led to a narrow passageway thickly encrusted with dust and cobwebs. Taking several candles, Bob and I began traveling down a corridor that had not felt the touch of anything human in centuries.

"If my calculations are correct, we should make a left turn right about here," I indicated with my candle. And just as I had suspected, a wide opening yawned at us

(Continued on page 39)



by WHITTIER FOWLES

ADVENTURES IN

WITCHCRAFT

THE RITE of exorcism, the casting out of evil spirits lodged within a human being, is an old one indeed. And while many of the more liberal of today's theologians tend to doubt its usefulness, nevertheless it is still a part of most organized religions. I have no desire to raise complicated questions of theology in my column; my sole purpose is to relate a bit of history behind this interesting facet of human history. I am neither defending nor opposing exorcism. I have no intention of justifying the existence of evil spirits. I leave it up to the intelligent reader to draw his own conclusions.

Exorcism comes from the Greek word *Exorkizo* (to put an oath to, to swear) and has its roots in the Persian and Zoroastrian mystery cults that flourished from about 700 B.C. to approximately 900 A.D. (although Zoroastrianism in a slightly modified form still exists today) in an attempt to explain the presence of evil on earth. They upheld the concept that there was an eternal conflict between right and wrong, good and bad, that would go on until the end of the world, with the good's eventual triumph over the forces of darkness. Those on the side of lightness were called angels; those opposed, devils. Both warring factions did battle right here on earth and were constantly searching for human allies.

The early Christians adopted the concept of a Dualistic system (good pitted against evil). It is true that devils existed in the religion of the Jews, but these evil spirits kept mainly in the

background. After Satan had tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise, he stepped back and let what he had begun, to snowball naturally into wars, famine and pestilence. In fact in the entire Old Testament, only once is the subject of wicked spirits ever brought up—the Witch of Endor in I Samuel, 28:7.

The Jews were content to trust in the goodness of God to combat evil. But the Christians were, in a sense, more paranoid. Devils were everywhere, hiding in tree tops, in wells, in doorways, all ready to tempt the unwary traveler and carry him off into Hell. The Christian had to be constantly on his guard against the demonic hosts.

In three separate places of the New Testament is the parable of Christ's healing a possessed man mentioned—Matthew 8:32; Mark 5:13; Luke 8:33. A poor traveler appealed to Christ for help. He could not control the twitching in his arms and legs (this may be a description of epilepsy). Christ drives out the devil; it goes into a herd of swine grazing nearby; the pigs rush madly to the edge of a cliff and hurl themselves over.

Whether or not this is a true story is debatable, of course, but it does bring up an interesting point. Whenever a devil is driven out, it must go somewhere else. Often a flask with a stopper is placed near the possessed one's lips (the genie in the bottle?) and the demon is captured, the vessel tightly sealed, and the whole thing is cast into the sea.

THE FEAR of devils reached epidemic proportions during the Middle Ages, where whole villages suspected of har-

boring evil spirits were leveled and the citizens brutally slaughtered (and don't forget about our own Salem Witch Trials, which were headed by some of the finest minds of Colonial America). A long and often complicated ritual was needed to drive out demons.

The Roman and Greek Orthodox churches still retain the position of exorciser; it is the second of the four minor orders, although in the Greek church the exorciser generally isn't ordained. And while the ritual is not put to much use today, it still survives in the *Rituale Romanum*. It is as follows. The exorciser reads the Litany of the Saints. Next he recites an *Our Father* in *secreto* (silent, but moving the lips); then two prayers are said, the first is for the one possessed and the other, an admonishment of the unclean spirit. Later, these chapters from the Bible are read: John 1, Mark 16, and Luke 10 or 11. The exorciser places the end of his stole (a long, purple ribbon worn about the neck) on the supplicants shoulder and his right hand on his head. Three long exorcisms are pronounced, with a special prayer that the released victim be not again afflicted. Nowadays a bishop's permission is needed to perform it, and of course is done only rarely, namely for the people who are troubled by unquiet ghosts in their homes. But the point is that centuries after we've reached the age of science and left the age of faith long behind, exorcism is still resorted to.

The *Rituale Romanum* defines possession as, "the inward control of human limbs and organs by an

(Continued on page 38)

REVENGE FROM HELL

(Continued from page 9)

A few farmers complained to the authorities after their chicken coops had been broken into; a few more, walking home from the town's sole tavern had claimed to have seen the figure of a creature, half man, half animal, stalking the moonlit meadows that comprised much of Glenwood Falls. The surrounding countryside was originally owned by Indians, and this creature was supposedly the incarnation of a great and powerful medicine man.

"How the mighty have fallen," yawned Ellen. "Reduced to swiping chickens. Thank goodness for social security."

Martha shot a quick "If looks could kill" glance and continued reading. The monster's name was Kishmo. He was stronger than a horse, faster on foot than a hare...

"Able to leap tall buildings at a single bound. It seems to me I've heard all this before."

...more agile than a snake and much smarter than a fox. Kishmo hated the white man for stealing his land, and vowed to seek revenge. After his physical death, his spirit came back to haunt the settlers. Kishmo could take any animal form he wanted and usually chose either the wolf or the bear.

Martha reverently closed the book.

"I bet that story went over big with the young blades escorting their sweeties home from the husking bee, or whatever they did for kicks back then. Speaking of kicks, my dear, I regret to inform you that I am still bored. Your story, although most enlightening, did little to relieve this all-encompassing heaviness of the air that seems to categorize your abode."

Just then the phone rang. Martha nearly knocked Ellen over in her haste to answer it.

"Hello." She covered the mouthpiece with her hand. "It's your father." She spoke into the receiver. "What's up, Uncle Bill? Sure, she's fine. Here," she passed the phone to Ellen.

"Hi, Dad—I'm so glad to hear from you. What—another week? No, nothing—it's just that I'm a little tired of being here. OK, I know you're busy. Goodbye."

She hung up the receiver. "Guess what," she said in a hollow voice.

"I've already guessed. And if it's any comfort, I'm just as sick of you as you are of me."

"It's not you, Martha," said Ellen, lying through her teeth, "it's this place. Heaven knows I certainly don't miss my father—we never did care for each other—but I had wanted him to take me away from here. And I wish he trusted me enough to let me stay alone in the first place. I'd really have some fun then!"

"Well, I was going to save it as a surprise, but since you're so down in the dumps, I'll tell you right now. There's a dance tonight—at the church. Mom and Dad said we could go if we wanted to."

"Zowie," said Ellen, not quite enthusiastically. "But at least it's something. What time does the country cotillion start?"

"At eight o'clock. And if you're good, I'll get you a date. I've already sort of promised I'd go with Tom."

"Thank goodness—that means I don't have to go with him. You're a real queen, Martha."

"So maybe Tom isn't as sophisticated as the guys you probably date, but he's a nice boy. Go wash your hair or something while I try to round you up a date. Oh, I almost forgot to tell you—it's going to be a costume party. Everybody's going to dress up like pioneers. We can wear some of Grandmother's old stuff. There's trunks of it in the attic."

SOME HOURS LATER, the two girls waited impatiently in front of the house for their dates. Both wore old-fashioned clothing that was oddly flattering to them. Martha had on a bright yellow dress, cut plain. Ellen's was a cheerful gingham number with plenty of flounces. She nervously toyed with the ruffles.

"When are they coming, Martha? You said at half past seven. It's later than that now. I can't stand to be kept waiting."

"Don't worry, they'll be here soon. And since Mother and Dad won't be back before tomorrow, we can stay out as late as we please. Isn't that exciting!"

"Frankly, no. Dad lets me stay out as late as I want to every night, now that I'm eighteen. Even on school nights."

The girls' conversation was interrupted by the sounds of an ancient automobile wheezing its way up the steep hill that separated Martha's house from the road lead-

ing to the village. The car shuddered to a halt and two boys jumped out.

Tom, Martha's boyfriend, called out, "Hi, girls. This is my friend Dick."

"So what happened to Harry?" cut in Ellen sarcastically.

"He's in the back seat. We're going to pick up his date next. Come on. Sorry we're late, but the car kept breaking down."

Ellen and Martha climbed in, and the young people went to pick up the third girl. Mandy, it turned out, was a great big, jolly girl who had them in gales of laughter long before they even got to the dance.

In spite of herself, Ellen was beginning to enjoy herself vaguely.

The party was held in the church basement which was decked out with colored streamers, flashing lights and paper flowers. There even was a live band that played music ranging from square dancing right up to the latest acid rock. The older people sat on the sides during some of the wilder dancing and watched the young folk with amused smiles.

THERE WAS also someone else who watched the dancers, but not with a very benevolent eye. The figure crouched in the shadow of the overhanging eaves; from his uncomfortable vantage point he could see into the basement window quite clearly, could watch the girls in their long gowns and the young men in their frock coats swirling about to music, not the same music it was true, but still it was the unpleasantly grating, un-Indian sounds he associated with the pale devils who had stolen his land.

White men had come to the peaceful falls, had driven off his cattle, murdered his brothers, raped his women. The memory of the great Kishmo was long, far longer than the fire sticks the invaders, intruders had used against his people.

He arched the small of his back to lean forward. Through the small window his eyes focused on one female in particular. Her long garment floated like the multi-colored mists rising from the falls as she performed her tribal dance. Her hair shone like the amber sometimes found near the water.

Her mere presence inspired in Kishmo, for it was indeed he who hid in the darkness, long-forgotten memories of desire and lust. But

(Continued on page 54)

ADVENTURES IN WITCHCRAFT

(Continued on page 34)

agent distinct from their owner." When you stop to consider it, then all forms of baptism are simplified rites of exorcism. The person to be baptized (or in the case of an infant, his godparents) must swear to uphold the sacred laws of the church and "to renounce Satan and all his pomp." The devil lurking within the individual is driven out by the application of salt in some cases and by immersion into water.

An interesting sideline of the question of demonic power appears in one of the saint's lives. St. Benedict, who perhaps may be entirely a fictional character, had jealous enemies who had tried to poison him. By refusing to drink the tainted liquid, he pronounced one of the most famous exorcisms of all times:

*Vade retro, Satana!
Numquam suade mihi vana.
Sunt mala quae libas,
Ipse venena bibas.*

*(Get you back, Satan!
Don't suggest vain things to
me.)*

*You offer but an ill potion.
Drink the poison yourself.)*

This incantation was used widely from St. Benedict's time (4th and 5th centuries, A.D.) right up to the sixteenth.

We don't know if evil spirits really do "wander about the world seeking the ruin of souls." And perhaps devils and other things that go bump in the night are merely representations of man's basic fears of hunger, loneliness and death. But one thing remains crystal clear. That the terror of the unknown, of the dark, of evil, has had a lasting impression on us all.

THE END

FEAST OF BLOOD

(Continued from page 25)

and frustration start from her eyes. Waltars for all his cold business sense and coarse jokes had been kind to her. He was one of the few clients Miss Winters had who hadn't treated her like dirt. The others who died in the Park—she hadn't known them. But Waltars wasn't a statistic—he was a person, someone who felt and breathed and laughed.

"And now he's dead," Hawkins murmured dully.

Liza had guessed Enid's secret right from the start. She had been her private secretary for more than five years, and in a way loved Enid. Hawkins had a secret too. She had been a drug addict. Enid had literally taken her from the gutter, helped her to cure herself and had given her a job when no one else would hire her. She knew Enid demanded a lot, but the lady executive also gave a lot in return. And Liza never forgot either a hurt or a favor.

The phone rang.

"Yes, Miss Winters, I'll do anything you say. You were taken ill yesterday and went home. I called you at five to see how you were. Oh yes, I know what to say." She hung up the phone and wept bitter tears.

ENID spent the day with routine matters. The police had come twice to speak with her, but it was more just for show than anything else. They knew no frail woman could possibly do such perverted damage to a healthy young male, and Waltars' corpse was indescribably mutilated. Plus Hawkins had stood up for her all the way. She wasn't in the least suspected of the sickening murder.

Night came and Enid felt the longing again. Usually one victim would keep her content for a few days. But the murder of Jim had fired up her desires until she was no longer in control of her passions.

The park again, only this time it was a young woman walking alone. She didn't put up a big struggle and Enid didn't remember what she even looked like. But the blood was rich and thick and Enid felt more satisfied than she had in a long time. Again she tore off the arm in a final search for more blood; then she hid in the bushes until a more human shape overtook her hideous features. When she left the park she was very careful to see that no one had spotted her.

One glance at Hawkins' pinched face the next morning and Enid thought, "She knows! I'm not sure how, but she knows what I am. I must kill her—tonight. But no blood. This will look like an accident. Perhaps a fall down the elevator shaft. But whatever, she must be dead by this evening!"

And just as quickly, Hawkins realized what was running through Enid's twisted brain. She waited until she was certain Miss Winters would be tied up with a client all afternoon before making her move.

"Sergeant Benhurst speaking. Can I help you?"

"Please—it's about the vampire. I—I'm in danger and can't talk over the phone..."

"Lady—for the grace of God, don't hang up!" I'll meet you anywhere you say."

Liza Hawkins named a street nearby, and five minutes later was waiting nervously. She mustn't stay too long or Enid might suspect something. Any second and the conference would be over. If the client left before Liza could get back, she'd be doomed.

A big policeman walked up to her.

"Are you the woman who called?" he asked simply.

She nodded curtly and they went into the deserted delivery section of an office building around the corner.

"Any help you can give I'll appreciate because—" his broad shoulders were convulsed by sobs. He tried to stop and turned his head, but still the dry gasps wracked his body.

In a moment he continued. "I'm sorry but I can't help it. My wife was the last victim of that thing and I vowed once I saw her corpse that I'd spend the rest of my life hunting down that animal—so help me God!"

Hawkins' heart went out to the big man who carried such a bitter burden. She touched his arm gently for a moment. Her plain face looked almost beautiful in the light of selfless compassion that shone like the sun breaking through thunder caps.

Quickly she told him her fantastic story. Perhaps another cop wouldn't have listened to her, but Benhurst had seen the condition of his wife's body and knew that he was pitted against something not human.

Together they formed a plan. Knowing perfectly well that no one else would believe them, they had only each other to rely on. It was dangerous, incredibly so, but each had a personal stake in it. Liza remembered Jim and wanted to help her employer, and in a way, friend; perhaps her body was beyond salvation, but her immortal soul may yet be sanctified. Benhurst thought of his dear and loving wife, now lying on a marble slab with her guts ripped out by a fiend. They agreed to meet again; they each left.

Hawkins raced back to the office. Thankfully it was a busy day and none of the secretaries had no-

ticed her leaving. She had just sat down when her intercom buzzed.

"Can you work late, Hawkins?" came the casual question. "We're behind on our work."

"Certainly, Miss Winters," said Hawkins, keeping her voice level and just as matter-of-fact. She had never been so frightened in her life.

Five o'clock came and went. The group of girls left the office. Hawkins watched their leaving with a sinking heart. What if Benhurst didn't show up? What if he couldn't handle the creature Enid would turn into just as the sun set? A thousands fears were running through her brain when an hour later Miss Winters' door opened a crack.

"Come here, Hawkins, and bring your steno paid. I'll dictate a few letters first."

Liza felt her knees buckle when she stood up. "My feet are asleep," she said to the questioning expression on her employer's eyes, the only feature she could see of her face.

Enid made no comment as she opened the door wider.

Liza screamed! That thing—that creature—wasn't Enid. Hawkins frantically scrambled over the top of the desk as the obscene animal came at her. She tripped on a wastebasket and was sent sprawling to the floor. In a second, the thing was on top of her, ripping, tearing, searching. As putrid breath fanned her face, Hawkins shrieked again, but even in her fear-clouded mind, she knew that there was no one in the deserted office building to help her.

She felt searing agony as fangs touched then pierced soft flesh.

Enid was too fast-driven at the sight and smell of blood to stop herself. She must have that warm fluid. Hawkins passed out and Enid drove in for the kill. Teeth lunged into the foul, clotted gums touched the neck of her latest victim. She started to draw the thick liquid into her throat, then...

"Ugh!" She screamed as something knocked against the side of her head. She jumped up snarling. A man was in the room—he had disturbed her. She'd make short work of this intruder then finish her feast.

But he had something clutched in his hand—a wooden stake! She was furious now. Stupid, puny mortal—he thought he could vanquish her. A deep snarl crept up in her throat. She lunged. The man snapped away just in time. Enid

hit hard against the wall, cleared her head. She was weak from hunger. She had to have blood.

Benhurst rolled in front of the prostrate Hawkins, lying with blood seeping from the deep cuts on her neck. He had no right to endanger her any more in his search for personal vengeance.

Christ—that thing was horrible. Those scars, the stench of clotted blood made him want to vomit. It came at him and exposed discolored fangs in a grimace of lust. "It wants me," thought Benhurst in a moment's panic. He felt himself become paralyzed by fear as it came nearer and nearer and nearer...

He lunged with all his might. A miss! He fell heavily to the carpet and rolled away under a desk. The furniture offered protection for a moment until the thing picked it up as if the desk were made of balsa wood instead of oak.

But Benhurst's reflexes were heightened rather than numbed by fear. He saw everything too clearly, too distinctly as if looking through a pair of binoculars.

Grabbing an over-turned lamp, he hurled it at the thing's head. The lamp broke squarely on the deformed features of the creature. It howled in pain and frustration.

This would be his only chance! Ten feet separated him from the piece of sharpened wood. Benhurst flung himself in the right direction. Scarcely conscious of it, his hand touched the wood.

Once more he approached the foul being and put his entire strength behind the thrust. He was thrown back by the recoil. But the stake he had brought found its mark. In between the breasts of the monster it stuck out like a last message of hope.

Enid was in ultimate agony. She howled and thrashed about. Falling to the floor, she writhed in pain, spewing rotting blood, and trying to dislodge the object that was turning her body to fiery ecstasy.

After a final quiver that sent her rolling in her own filth, she was dead. Another wave of agony and darkness descended on her for the rest of eternity.

Benhurst watched with fascinated horror as the body who had sucked blood from others began to dehydrate itself. Skin shriveled up; teeth fell out and rolled away on the floor; the belly bloated and finally burst like a balloon, filling the room with an unbearable stench. Then all exploded into a final nauseating green gas.

Benhurst went over to Hawkins. Liza groaned then slowly opened her eyes.

"What..."

He silenced her with a hand placed softly on her mouth. "We've won," he said in an almost whisper. "That's enough for now."

Liza began to sob quietly. Benhurst held her like a baby and gently rocked her back and forth.

THE END

THE SILENT SPIRIT

(Continued from page 33)

in the moving darkness.

"But—we're in the vault! How? What does this mean?" Bob's voice echoed against the cold stone.

"No time for explanations now," I said in lieu of an answer. "We need those tools right now. Hurry—not a moment's to be lost!"

We quickly climbed the worn stairway and raced to the front of the house. Carrying the necessary implements, we went back to Mrs. Rogers' room.

"The ghost wouldn't have returned to the vault," I explained to Bob. "And we didn't meet it on the stairs after Mrs. Rogers screamed. That means one of two possibilities. Either she is still in the room, or there's another exit."

"But I thought ghosts could walk through walls."

"Quite wrong. But they can walk through closed doors. Help me sound the paneling."

We began rapping with our knuckles on the hardwood that covered the walls. It was painstaking work for every square foot had to be tested. But finally our patience was rewarded.

"Over here," Bob cried. "I think I've found something!"

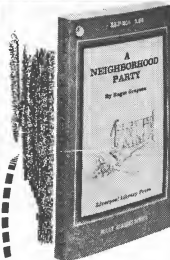
About four feet from the floor, the paneling gave forth a hollow noise when struck.

"This is it, Bob—the key to the ghost's existence."

We carefully removed the wooden wainscoting—behind it was another passageway! The tunnel went on for perhaps thirty feet, then ended in a faint glow.

"Bob," I said quietly, "what is going to happen next is going to take all the courage you possess. If you don't feel you can manage it, please tell me now. I won't think any the less of you if you decide to back out because frankly I don't know if I have the courage to do what has to be done. If you want to leave, I'll understand because it is beyond your experience."

"I don't care what it is, sir," Bob



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said stoutly. "Where Chris is concerned, I've got the guts."

"Good boy. See that faint light—it's our ghost. I'm going to walk in and coax it to follow me. I want you to turn off every light in the house, then go to the churchyard. Open the third casket from the right in the Barlette mausoleum, and wait for me."

He squeezed my hand and left. I was terrified at what I was about to attempt, but I couldn't show fear to the thing that waited at the end of the tunnel or all would be lost.

I began walking toward it after I extinguished my candle.

"Lady Alice," I said softly, trying to keep my voice steady, "do not be afraid. I won't hurt you. Come to me and I promise I shall help you."

The beam of light gradually grew brighter and after several minutes began moving. I began to sweat.

"Come, Lady Alice," I again gently crooned, "come to me."

The spectre drew herself where I could dimly make out the figure more exactly. But it was still cloudy and indistinct.

Still speaking not above a whisper, I began moving backwards, praying that I would not hit any obstacle and lose my balance. Any sudden movement on my part would be disastrous.

"Follow, Lady Alice."

I was in the bedroom now and saw with grateful eyes that Bob had followed my instructions. The house was in complete darkness.

The spectre-child stepped out of the tunnel and entered the room. Her ghostly farthingale made no noise as it glided across the floor.

Up the hall then down the stairs I softly drew the child to its destination.

There was no breeze or moon when I walked out the terrace. Only the pounding in my ears broke the stillness of the night. The dew soaked my trouser cuffs as I slowly moved backwards, still chanting to the unearthly figure.

From the corner of my eye I could see Bob standing shock still. With a movement of my hand I bade him give us a wide berth.

Lady Alice and I entered the chanel house. The child raised sightless eyes to me and formed one word with her lips. I nodded. She gave me a brilliant smile and entered the tomb. The light was suddenly extinguished and I quickly secured the lid.

It was only then that I fainted.

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"TELL US, Varlet," said Mrs. Rogers as she poured the morning tea in the sunny breakfast room, "how did you find out about Lady Alice? You refused to say anything last night. We've all calmed down since then and I think we should know."

"Gladly, Mrs. Rogers," I said as I accepted a cup of the steaming liquid. "I found a diary in the old library. It told me most of what I needed to know. The rest was logic. Lady Alice's father had married a poor but beautiful and virtuous peasant girl. The family was bitterly opposed to the unequal union, but as Sir William had full possession of the property, they had to keep their discontentment to themselves. Alice was a product of that ill-fated marriage."

"As you well know, the Barlette's were Catholic. When Henry VIII began his persecution of the Catholic minority, Sir William had two hidden passageways constructed. One was a 'priest's hole'—a hiding place used only for emergencies, and having a dead end. The other led from the vault where the priest entered the house to the bedroom where mass was said."

"Word got out that the Barlette's refused to comply with

Henry's orders. Sir William was arrested and taken to the Tower of London where he was eventually beheaded."

"His relatives wanted possession of the house and property. They adopted the state religion. But William's wife and child were still living. One night some relatives entered the bedroom and strangled the woman. The child hid in the priest's hole. They knew she was there and blocked the exit. The baby starved to death."

"Later they took the tiny body and buried it in the basement. Then they closed off both passageways."

"But how did you fit it all together?" Chris interrupted.

"By sheer logic. The child wanted her mother. She tried to find her."

"But what gets me," put in Bob, "is why the ghost suddenly began to be active."

"I can explain that also, Bob, but not in such logical terms. I've seen too much of the supernatural not to believe in it. Ghosts exist. But when you stop to consider how many people died violently, why, there wouldn't be enough room in the world to contain all the disembodied spirits. Through careful in-

vestigation, I've discovered that no apparition can last longer than 450 years. Alice and her mother died in 1520. The child felt herself fading, and for this reason doubled her efforts to find her mother. Believe me, she was active before, but was so shy and quiet that no one learned of her presence until she became bolder."

"I'll have the body put in the same casket," Mrs. Rogers said gently. "It's not much, but it's the least we can do."

"One more question," Bob remarked wonderingly, "What would have happened if Alice had never found her mother?"

"Nothing at all. Her spirit would have been absorbed by the air and she would have ceased to exist. But as Mrs. Rogers said, it was the very least we could do for the poor child. Please pass the sugar."

THE END

THE ZOMBIES WALKED

(Continued from page 20)

"Name one victim, Garcia." At the peon's defeated silence, Filipe continued triumphantly, "See, I told you. Rank superstition. And the sooner you get such foolish no-

BE TALLER Instantly!



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tions out of your head, the better. We've got a war to be won. We don't have the time to waste worrying about inventions you illiterate fools make up. The meeting is over. You are all dismissed."

The peasants obediently filed past their growling commander and went their separate ways toward home. Only Manuel hung back to speak to his leader.

"Perhaps you have been too hard on the men, *senor*," he began in a respectful voice. "They do not want to put the lives of their women in danger. And it is dangerous to come here at night. After all, I too have heard the rumors of creatures who stalk the mountain passes and kill unlucky people who meet them. Perhaps it is true."

"Nonsense!" shouted Filipe, now thoroughly exasperated. "If I can't even trust you, my second in command, we shall be lost. These are foolish stories. I want no more of them. Be back here early tomorrow morning to help me unpack the rifles." He turned on his heel and strode away.

Manuel shrugged his shoulders. The *Capitan* was too harsh, too unbending with the men, but what could be done? He too left the headquarters and went home.

IT WAS a pity that Don Filipe persisted in his headstrong, "enlightened" views because it just so happened that these pleasant fantasies of mountain creatures were true. What are commonly called "zombies" exist only in Haiti, of course. But there are other methods of raising the dead aside from calling upon the intervention of the dread Zombi, god of the Serpent. Eons before the Spanish came to destroy the stately, magnificent civilizations of the Aztec, Mayan and Incan peoples, there was yet another civilization with powers far greater than those even of now. Some say they were the survivors of the ill-fated Atlantis, swept under the sea in the very dawn of the world. Others call them demi-gods and angels who somehow escaped when Lucifer and his crew fell from the heights of paradise into tormenting hell. But whoever or whatever they were, their forces were great. Death they controlled and next to death, life. Theirs was the complete dominion over all the earth.

But like human beings everywhere, for deep down they were human, they fought bitterly among themselves. After one especially bloody internal war, they were so

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weakened that they had not the strength to resist when armed bands of the mountain savages came to lay waste to their civilization. The few survivors were diffused all over South America. Gradually these individuals intermingled with the wild tribes of natives, their enormous powers nearly forgotten. Almost, but not entirely. For in isolated cases, some remnants of the old magic still remained, carefully passed down from one generation to the next. True, most of the spells were forgotten or pushed aside under the steady influence of the missionaries who came with the *conquistadores* to make the Indians give up their gold; but some ancient chants still survived. And one of these was the ability to make the dead rise and obey, silently, mindlessly, unconsciously, until the natural physical decay of the flesh made it impossible for the creatures to carry out commands.

The out-lying districts surrounding Cristobel were infested with these walking dead. But as the powerful one could keep these beings waiting for years before giving the order to arise, no one knew of their existence until they became active, stalking mountain sides until fresh victims were found. Not everyone who saw them was killed; only some. There seemed to be a pattern of sorts lying behind the murders, but no one could break the code. Least of all the frightened denizens of Cristobel who heard day by day chilling tales of horror and pillage.

THEN NEXT Filipe called a meeting of the revolutionaries, the men came meekly with their women. They were petrified at having to talk the four lonely miles to the hacienda. The creatures had been seen less than a mile from the town by a trembling youth who lived to tell of it. "They walked," he cried hysterically to those in the market place who dropped their business and came running to surround him, "in a single file—their flesh rotted off their bones. Flies and maggots followed them. *Los Muertos* had no eyes—only gleaming white circles. And every living thing fled before them!"

But Don Filipe expected to be obeyed. The fear-filled men and their wives followed his orders and met in the house in the meadow.

"The men are angry with you, sir," hurriedly whispered Manuel as Filipe bent to enter the low door

that led into the one-roomed hall. "They do not think you should force them to leave their homes at night. If you could only make the meetings during the daylight hours..."

"They must learn discipline from their superiors, Manuel," replied Don Filipe haughtily. "If I am unafraid, they must be also."

"But you do not have to walk through the jungle at night, *mi capitán*."

"It makes no difference, I tell you! Now call the meeting to order."

LATER that same night, old Vandra, Filipe's nurse, sat on her porch and listened to the nocturnal sounds that never failed to delight her. Immediately after the young master had been sent to school, Don Frederico had the old woman moved to a tiny hut far away from the other servants' cottages. Her presence in the main house had never failed to make Frederico nervous. But as she was an excellent and devoted nurse to his son, he could see no justification for letting her go. Vandra found living alone quite pleasant because she neither liked nor trusted the other servants. A full-blooded Indian, she felt superior to the half-castes she saw before her. The others called her a princess, in mocking voices; but she was a princess—in a way. Hers was a very ancient family and she was the last member of it.

Her head drooped perceptively. She was worried about her Filipe. Vandra sensed that the fiery passions of youthful extreme on the part of her young master had turned into an insatiable lust for power. The people of the village she considered her people now by adoption and she did not want to see them slaughtered by the government troops just for Filipe's pride and vanity. He wasn't training them for revolution but just to fulfill his own frustrations as a leader. That Filipe loved her she had no doubt, but she, if anyone, knew of his obstinate behavior. He would not listen to her, would refuse to change his course of action. The small, village group would be killed by the well-trained regulars. They would be murdered just like...

Vandra's eye turned inwards as she remembered things that had occurred centuries before she was born. The events stood clearly etched in her memory. Once in the misty beginnings of the world

there was a special people. Yes, Vandra was the last survivor of that race of power. It was she who controlled the hideous horde of the un-dead. The scattered mountain people—they had helped to slay her ancestors, and she would seek revenge. Not everyone was guilty, it was true, and Vandra had been careful to separate the blameless from the tainted. That was why not everyone who had seen *los muertos* had been killed. But those who deserved punishment would reap the consequences.

She got up slowly. She was old, her end was near. So little time remained to accomplish what she had to do. Once she was gone, her dread minions would sink stinking into the earth, never to rise again. She had to finish her mission of revenge or risk never finding peace after the grave.

"I WANT that man whipped until his blood covers the ground!" shouted Don Filipe over the humble protests of Manuel. "I told him to oil his gun properly and he deliberately . . . DELIBERATELY . . . went against my commands. He must be made an example of. My orders will be followed to the letter. I will tolerate no disobedience." He walked briskly away, leaving the task of flogging the unlucky peon in Manuel's reluctant hands. Filipe was still bristling when he met Vandra on the road. She was walking to the market place with a sack of grain to sell. She set it down and looked at him.

"You were too harsh, Filipe." She reached out and gently touched his arm.

He angrily shook off her hand. "Mind your own business, old woman," he snapped, "or else I'll have you whipped!"

"Filipe, *por favor*. Listen to me. What you are doing is wrong. It is evil to use others for your own ends. Our people are oppressed—help them, but do not send them unarmed against the government troops. It is murder. It is against . . ."

"Be off with you!" he shouted, brandishing a stick. He laughed as he watched her scurry down the road. "I have no time to listen to your sniveling sentiments. I am supreme commander, not you. Leave me in peace, old fool!"

Far down the dirt-packed lane, she paused and turned her head to the rapidly receding figure of Filipe. "Yes," she whispered, "that is exactly what I shall do."

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DON FILIPE read somewhere that all great generals liked to take solitary walks before retiring for the night. Not wishing to be left out, he cultivated the habit. He would leave through a door in the garden wall, amble for a mile or two, then return to the house by another route. He found it relaxing after the day's heavy responsibilities.

Filipe was glad this day was over. It had been an especially trying one. His men simply refused to listen to him. There were even rumors that some of his troops had left him to join that idiot Bolivar's men in the next county. "The stupid fools," he muttered through clenched teeth. "They've got to listen to me, to ME! I don't care about their piddling freedom—*perdida de tiempo*—waste of time. I'm their master, not the government, not the church, not the military. My word is law!"

He viciously decapitated a row of chrysanthemums with his walking stick and pretended they were his enemies. Then he left the confines of the walled garden and began his walk around the estate.

About two miles from the house, he quickly picked up his ears. Filipe thought he heard a noise. There—it happened again. Just over the side of that low hill, near Vandra's house.

He strode purposefully toward it—then stopped dead in his tracks.

"AAGH!" he screamed—but too late. Things, hundreds of things grabbed him. He struggled furiously but bony arms held like steel grips. The harder he tried to free himself, the stronger they became. And the smell of decaying flesh made him want to vomit.

"Help—for God's sake! Help me, Vandra!"

Like a queen of ancient times, Vandra walked out on the porch. But it was a different Vandra. No longer stooped and toothless, she stood proud, tall, mightier than life. As she walked towards him, the things dropped away. Filipe collapsed in front of her, weeping wildly. He covered his eyes from the dreadful sight in front of him. "Vandra," he sobbed.

She stooped over him, then turned away. "You want to command men—so be it. Take these who have already died so that the living need not perish by your folly. Lead them on to victory, my son." She walked away.

The un-dead again approached cowering Filipe. He screamed with

terror as he felt icy death reach out and lift him bodily from the ground. His heart beat faster and faster until everything in sight became too clear, too detailed. Suddenly an agonizing pain broke in his chest and he felt blood in his mouth, eyes, ears. He gasped as shooting fire blinded him—the instant before he died of fright!

The things began to carry him to their lair. But they stopped and began to waver, sway, then finally collapse into a pile of foul-smelling shreds of flesh and clothing hanging wildly to dull bone.

Vandra clutched the railing of her porch as dry sobs wracked her ancient shoulders. The irony, the bitterness overwhelmed her. She had failed to accomplish her vengeance on the enemies of her family's ancestors. And to do it, she had to sacrifice that which she had loved the most. Starlight gilded the sparse tereopods on her withered cheeks. She moaned softly, stooped, then fell. And in her fall, joined her people.

THE END

SCREAMING HORROR

(Continued from page 29)

a sizable membership—and like most of the other odd-ball, quack religions in that paradise for phony "isms," it was a prosperous business proposition.

"I can't be touched," Lorentz went on. "I even have a license."

I KNEW THIS. I'd gone down to Room One at the Los Angeles City Hall weeks before. There, in the License and Sales Tax Division of the City Clerk's office, employees had dug through their records for me. They came up with the information that the Circle of Selena had been duly licensed to do business as a "Religious Group" in the city of Los Angeles, as provided in the Municipal Code!

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"Our hands are tied—unless someone makes a formal complaint," a veteran detective informed me. "There are a lot of these cults we'd like to move against—but we can't do a thing until we have definite evidence of a crime."

Conrad Lorentz stood up. "I've got other things to do," he announced. "You can stay here—and sit quietly or pace the floor or whatever else you feel like doing at the

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moment. I'll come back after you when I think that Diane is ready to leave . . ."

The door closed behind him. I stared blankly at the draped walls. It was incredible that such things could be happening in the heart of a great American city—in 1958—yet they were happening.

Diane Simmons, my fiancé, lay on the floor in a nearby room, gripped by a wild frenzy. To my stunned horror, I had discovered that there actually were witches, sorcerers and warlocks in the 20th Century!

Fantastic? Unbelievable?

I would have thought so too—six months ago. I would have laughed in the face of anyone who even suggested that there was any real basis of fact in the stories and legends told about magic and witchcraft.

Yeah, I, Jim Forrester, 27, a sensible, fairly level-headed shop foreman, had been forced to admit the existence of dark, evil forces against which common sense and even the theories of modern science offered no defense!

Diane and I had been going together for nearly two years—and we'd been engaged for almost ten months. I'd always been good-naturedly tolerant about her interest in such things as astrology, palm-reading and seances. I'd allowed her to drag me along to all sorts of nutty fortune-tellers and lectures.

All the screwball mumbo-jumbo was just so much rot to me, but I figured that Diane was only 22 and that she was going through a stage she'd eventually get over. Then, in May, 1958, one of her maiden aunts died and left her some money—about \$20,000. That helped turn Diane's interest in the occult into a full-time occupation. She quit her job as a secretary for a Wiltshire Boulevard advertising agency and spent just about every moment reading books and magazines about astrology, psychic phenomena and that sort of stuff.

It was in September that she first heard about the Circle of Selena. I had picked her up at her apartment one evening. We were going out to dinner and the movies, but she changed all that.

"I've just been told about the most wonderful group!" she bubbled enthusiastically. I groaned inwardly.

"It's quite famous and I'm surprised I hadn't heard about it before," she went on. "I understand that it's headed by a man named Conrad Lorentz. Some of the girls I know say that he's simply marvelous—he has real occult powers . . ."

"Oh, nuts!" I griped. "What does this one do—levitate tables or make ghosts appear in a dark room?"

We went to the "Circle's" weekly meeting—which was being held that night. The cult had its headquarters in a huge house up in the Hollywood Hills—up above Beechwood Drive in what used to be called "Hollywood-land" before the war.

I didn't like Lorentz. From the first moment I saw him and I didn't like the setup he had, either. As we came in, Lorentz stared at Diane as if she was naked—and it was obvious that he liked what he saw as he mentally undressed her with his hot eyes.

The groups assembled formed the usual Hollywood cult pattern. There were some "Big People" present—you know, movie directors and one or two second-string actors. There were also the usual bored wives, a few nances, some goopy-looking men and a sprinkling of unattached, attractive girls.

The "ritual" followed the medieval "Tarot Cult" symbolism. As far as I could tell, it had to do with the "mystic" symbols represented on "Tarot" or old-fashioned fortune-telling cards. These originated centuries ago in Europe and are all mixed up with occultism and sorcery.

There were heavy sexual overtones to every part of the ritual. I gathered pretty quickly that there were other, less public meetings of the group during which there was less talk and ritual—and a lot more playing around.

The whole deal gave me the willies. There was something eerie—unclean—about the Circle of Selena. Diane, however, was fascinated by the outfit and by its leader.

"I've got to go there more often," she told me. "I feel that I'll really be able to enter the arcana of the forbidden through the Circle of Selena." Di talked like that.

WE WENT TO TWO MORE MEETINGS together. Then Diane broke a few dates. I couldn't understand it and I pinned her down.

"I'm attending Conrad Lorentz's special classes," she confessed. "He says I am naturally adept—that I was born with occult powers—and he wants to initiate me into the Inner Temple . . ."

I argued and got nowhere. Di explained that there were several other "apprentice initiates" studying with Lorentz. That made me feel a little better—but not much.

I was worried, and so I decided to do some checking. That's when I went to City Hall and to the Police. I had a friend of mine who was a reporter on a Los Angeles daily search his paper's morgue. He came up with a little information but it didn't tell me much. There were indications that Lorentz had been mixed up in several shady affairs—but there had been no proof.

I tried another angle. I went to libraries and bookstores. I gathered up everything I could find on witchcraft, black magic, sorcery and the occult. I read until my eyes were ready to drop out of my skull.

What knocked me for a loop was the fact that many doctors and scientists actually admit there are people with supernatural powers. They openly acknowledge not only

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the possibility—but the probability—that witches, magicians and sorcerers exist!

No less an authority than Dr. Edward Podolsky, M.D., psychiatrist at the New York Medical College, claims that "black magic is taught in secret schools at both Oxford and Cambridge" in England!

Dr. Angold Bader, of Chicago, who has made a lifetime study of "black magic" in the United States says that there are at least 2,500 "sorcerers" in the country today.

"One may be skeptical and a doubter," says Dr. Bader, "but the indisputable fact remains that many of these 'black magicians' perform acts and produce phenomena which cannot be explained by science. It is not too far-fetched to assume that these 'black magicians' are quite capable of committing heinous crimes, even murders . . ."

As for the dangers facing those who dabble in the occult—scientists warn of them in no uncertain terms. In regard to black magic Dr. Edward Podolsky says, "These practices are an open door to insanity."

There was more, much more. I told Diane all about what I'd read and begged her to break away from Lorentz and his cult. She told me to mind my own business. But she was my business.

The only thing left to do was to go to the meetings with her. Lorentz of course quickly realized that I was antagonistic toward him and his group. I, in turn, sensed that his interest in Diane was far from that of a religious leader toward a disciple.

He took the initiative. He invited us both to attend a "Sabbat" being held the following Friday night. I tried to say no, but Di was enthusiastically insistent. She had made up her mind to take part—and I decided that I might as well go along, even though I had a premonition that something was about to happen.

The rites began at eleven o'clock on Friday night. We arrived about fifteen minutes early and were ushered into what Lorentz called his "Temple of Tarot." Occult symbols and pentagrams decorated the dimly-lit walls. Some 12 or 14 people were already there.

Diane was breathing hard as she sat next to me. A few moments later the lights went out. A single, red spotlight blazed down from the ceiling and illuminated a garish altar. Lorentz—clad in the flowing robes of a warlock—stood there. He uttered a long incantation.

Two half-dressed women—I recognized them as girls I'd seen at previous meetings—lighted braziers. They flung some powder into the flames. A heavy, yellow, incense-laden mist spread through the room and hung motionless in the air.

"Spirits of darkness," Lorentz called out, "hear me and come forth . . ."

There was another hour or so of

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this mumbo-jumbo, the ritual becoming more suggestive and obscene. Lorentz and his two "high-priestesses" disported themselves on the stage-like "sanctuary" while the audience grunted and gasped. It looked like third-rate burlesque to me.

"We shall drink of the elixir of the spirit of darkness!" Lorentz said. The two half-naked women brought large brass cups. They were passed from hand to hand. Each person drank I tried to fake it, but Diane made me take two full swallows of the stuff before I passed it on. It tasted like cheap wine.

Meanwhile Lorentz was leading the congregation in slow sensuous chants. They went on and on. I began to get drowsy. My eyes stayed open, but I felt as though I was falling asleep. I tried to shake myself awake. I couldn't. I couldn't even move!

THE ROOM SEEMED to be closing in around me. Dark shadows moved and swayed. I felt a presence—the presence of a force, a spirit, a devil, call it what you will. It was near me and all around me.

Did I imagine it, or was there really someone or something else standing alongside of Lorentz? Everything blurred and grew hazy.

"Come forward, Diane Simmons—and be initiated."

I was aware that Diane was standing up—moving to the altar. I wanted to grab her, to stop here, but I couldn't move.

She stood in front of Conrad Lorentz. His face had changed completely—diabolical, inhuman—almost unalive. Lorentz gestured at her. She repeated some words after him.

He reached out and touched her. She remained immobile. Impotent rage swept over me. He reached around her shoulders and slowly drew her to him...

I must have been unconscious. Either some hypnotic power or a drug placed in the wine I had drunk or some other thing of which I was unaware had sent me into a comatose state of suspended animation.

When I came out of it, it was dawn. I was lying on a couch and Lorentz—now wearing a business suit—stood over me. He was smiling sardonically. I tried to sit up.

"It's no use trying that," he murmured. "You are still under my influence, my friend."

To prove it, he made me see ghastly images, visions straight out of hell. He himself seemed to vanish and reappear at will. Only when my mind was completely exhausted did he stop.

"Now I can show you your fiancé," he suddenly announced. He took me into the room where Diane lay on the floor. She was in a condition that witch-burners called "possessed by devils." Someone had put a dressing gown on her. She'd torn and ripped that to ribbons. She

mouthed blasphemous and foul words and sentences.

"Diane has quite an affinity for the darker forces," the cult leader murmured. "She really behaved like a witch of old last night. It's a pity you didn't see what she did—and with whom..."

Then he told me. My belly knotted and churned. I wanted to kill him but my body seemed to be drained of any power to act. Diane—my fiancé—had plumbed the depths of degradation and depravity. And I knew that Lorentz was telling the truth.

"If you've seen enough, you can come to my office," he concluded.

I went with him meekly. I went into his office and I sat there, staring blankly at the walls until he returned.

"Your fiancé is ready for you—a little tired, but otherwise quite unharmed," he announced.

Diane stared at my face as though she barely recognized me. I led her out to the car. She was wearing the same clothes she had when we'd arrived the night before. Most of the scratches she'd inflicted on herself were hidden.

"Di, I want to..." I began shakily when we were in the car.

"Take me home," she muttered. "I don't want to talk now."

We drove down Beechwood Drive. It was a clear day and I could see the vast carpet-panorama of Los Angeles spread out below us. It no longer appeared real—there was no reality. I pulled up in front of Diane's apartment building.

"Diane, let's sit down and talk..." I tried again.

"There's nothing to say," she replied icily. "I don't want to see you again."

"But—we're going to be married." A crazy, terrifying smile—like that of a well-fed leopard—curled her lips. The lids of her eyes closed half-way.

"We can't get married, Jim," she purred contentedly. "I was married last night—on the other side."

"Did For God's sake!"

"Oh, I'm not through with you yet—not really," Diane drawled. "I'll want you later—after I've gained more knowledge and experience of the dark arts."

"What?"

"Yes, Jim. I will want you—to use you. I don't know when that will be, but when I'm ready I'll send for you. And you'll be waiting..."

She got out of the car without another word, without even looking back, and went into her solid brick steel and mortar apartment house.

No. I haven't tried to contact her since. I want to forget all about her—and all about Conrad Lorentz and his Tarot Cult—his "Circle of Selenia."

I've tried to get it all out of my mind—but I can't. I know that I'm just marking time, just waiting.

And I'm scared...

THE END

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BURNING WITCH

(Continued from page 16)

contacts went, it was a different story. People generally avoided her and came to call only when extremely necessary, with holes in their nets or sick relatives at home.

"Who's there?" an annoyed voice called to their summons.

"Akau and Takomi," the youth hesitatingly answered. "Our mother doesn't feel well and we'd like some of your tea."

The old woman opened the door a crack, peered at them closely, then allowed them to enter. The house was in a shambles with low tables overturned, screens ripped wide open, and dust lying in a thick carpet covering everything.

"I don't have time for house-keeping," she grumbled by way of apology, then led them to a small back room. This was her work area. Sets of crucibles, cauldrons, knives and blades were placed on three sides of the chamber. What space was left was piled high with large sacks of fragrant herbs, mushrooms, dried flowers and strange plants.

As she mixed the herb recipe, Harlu asked Takomi about his life in Tokyo, and seemed interested in his answers. She kept marveling over the population of the huge city.

Adding the last ingredient, she put the tea in a small, leather pouch and silently refused the coins the young officer held out to her.

"Your mother is a kind woman. Now, leave me." She showed them to the door. Takomi and Akau bowed and left.

"She seems the same to me," remarked the youth as he and his sister walked back home.

"But you can't say for sure—even though we've all become a little insane recently. I wanted to take Mama-san out of here and find a new home, but she refused."

"I'm sure there's a reasonable explanation for all your fears, Akau. And I'm going to stay here until I find it!" Takomi's voice hardened with conviction.

THE NEXT WEEK was spent profitably. With Akau's help, Takomi questioned the townspeople in such a way that they never realized they had been interrogated. He would assume a nonchalant position and ask what was new; later on he wrote down the answers just as he heard them. But

the more data he received, the less sense everything made. Just as the weird events were beginning to fall into some sort of pattern that could be explained by a law of physics, Takomi was informed about another preternatural occurrence that completely threw out his theories.

One night the young officer stayed up unusually late writing minute descriptions of the village's fears. His eyes burned with the effort. Deciding to stop for the night, he neatly gathered up his papers, put them in a safe place under his bed, and lay down to rest. He was more convinced now than ever of a perfectly logical reason for everything that had happened. And eventually he knew he'd find the key.

"I think I'll ask Oraku again about the two-headed dog he saw," yawned Takomi to himself as he stretched out on his pallet. His heavy eyelids closed and he fell into a deep sleep.

SUDDENLY, he found himself on the floor! Dazed, he looked around him.

"What the . . ." he began, but another explosion of noise cut him off. The room swayed as the delicate paper walls were rent in two. Crockery smashed and books and scrolls careened wildly through space.

Takomi scrambled to his feet and grabbed a stationary wall partition for support as the room shuddered with another mighty lurch.

His mother and sister!

He staggered down the hall, holding on to anything immobile. He found Akau in their mother's room. She had both arms around Mama-san's shoulders. Both women were terrified beyond endurance.

"Put on your sandals," he ordered curtly. "There's broken glass all over and we've got to leave." He surprised himself with the calmness he felt in the face of unknown danger, but he knew the lives of at least three persons depended completely on his self-control.

Akau helped him half-lift, half-drag their mother to the street. A fire had broken out somewhere and in the weird, flickering glare, the figures of the villagers could be seen scrambling out of their pitching houses. Everywhere there was noise and mass hysteria. The thin wail of a child cut through the commotion; a dog howled in pain, its hind legs crushed to a bloody pulp by a fallen whet stone; more broken glass as another cottage top-

pled to the shifting cobblestoned road.

"Earthquake!" a voice shrieked, and almost by instinct, the frantic fisher-people ran to steady ground by the sea.

Takomi and his family stood with the others, panting with exhaustion and terror until the earth shook in a final spasm. A dead silence prevailed, broken only by the ocean's calm roar as it hit the beach, splattered the shivering citizens with spray, then rolled out to sea again.

Takomi and his sister sensed simultaneously what was going to happen next. Their eyes met, they nodded. Akau entrusted the care of Mama-san to the kindly family standing next to them who promised to see the old woman safely home. Then she joined her brother who had moved slowly to the outskirts of the crowd. They began to walk down the beach, scarcely daring to breathe. The tension in the air reached unbearable dimensions. They had gotten over 300 paces from the others before the shouts snapped the silence.

"Harlu! She's the one responsible!"

"Let's get her!"

"Somebody start a fire!"

Takomi and Akau started running down the beach to the old woman's hut. Thankfully they had managed to have a headstart on the mob. And they were going to use this advantage to save the widow. Racing, panting, their lungs on fire with the torturous exertion, they reached the cottage.

"Harlu, you've got to flee," gasped Takomi, hanging on to the tilted door frame. Never before had he been so close to fainting. Things swum dizzily in front of him. "Hurry—not a moment to spare. Harlu, come on!"

He staggered into the house. Harlu wasn't there!

"She must have sought safety in the hills—she wasn't on the beach."

"Takomi—look! They're coming!" Akau pointed with a shaking finger at the long line of quickly advancing figures. The people were indistinct in the night, but the flaming torches each held made a giant, illuminous caterpillar swaying crazily on the beach. Already the sounds of mob violence reached the pounding ears of the brother and sister.

Takomi grabbed Akau's hand and pulled her into the hut.

"If they see us, they may kill us too—they won't control their

anger," he whispered.

"What are we going to do?"
Naked terror quivered in her voice.

Without answering, he led her into the workroom. Grabbing a knife from the tangled debris on the floor, he cut an opening in the paper wall. Together they escaped just as the first flaming brands of the mob were tossed on the roof.

Takomi and Akau circled around and ran with spent strength to the hills.

"The others will be coming any second," he panted. "We've got to find her first!"

Through twisted shrubs and low branches that stung their faces as they stumbled toward the mountains, the pair raced to their mission of saving an innocent person from agonizing death. They came across an unexpected clearing littered with large boulders and scattered bushes set in long grass.

"There she is, Akau, over there. Harlu, run for your life! The village thinks you're a witch and wants to burn you. Akau can take you to our house where you'll be safe. And I'll stay here and try to stall the mob."

"Come on, Harlu," cried Akau as she went toward the black-robed figure.

Harlu turned slowly to face them.

"I am not afraid," she said quietly.

Akau screamed and hid her face. Takomi felt his knees buckle under him.

In front of them stood a creature—it couldn't be human! A leer of death was stamped on its mask-like face. Two glowing eyes glared defiantly at them. It raised its

hands high over the misshapen head; the sleeves of the robe fell to reveal hideous, wrinkled skin that hung in clay-colored lumps.

A blast of sickening, hot air brought the unhappy witnesses to the ground as the thing cackled.

"There are millions of us hiding on this earth just waiting until it's time. Japan is first, America will come next—then the whole world will be overcome." It turned its contorted body to an unseen presence. "I hear and obey, Master."

The shouts and flickering lights of the furious mob were approaching rapidly. The wind picked up suddenly to the velocity of a typhoon. Takomi and Akau, already on their faces, sunk their fingers deep into the grass in an effort to keep from being blown off the side of the cliff and into the sea.

"Kill her—kill her!" The steady death-chant was getting louder. Wavering torchlight was already casting strange, moving shadows on the two cowering, hunched figures.

"I have sown the seeds. The great and mighty Evil One shall rule the day. I come, O Lord of Darkness, I come to you!"

"Cover your face," Takomi screamed to his sister over the howling wind. They both pressed their bodies into the soil as a great, booming noise rocked the landscape. A flash that was meant to blind them ignited the entire sky for an eternal second. Then silence.

The wind cut to nothingness. Takomi lifted his dirt-stained face and looked about him. Not a tree in sight was left standing. It was as if a giant hand impatiently had come to sweep away paper toys from a table top.

Every muscle in Takomi's wracked body was on fire. He stumbled groggily to his feet and staggered over to help his sister. Pushing back a strand of damp hair, he looked up to see the mob standing in front of him. They had seen the raw strength of the Mighty One from a distance and the power had silenced them.

An old fisherman hobbled from the awed onlookers to help Takomi support his benumbed sister.

"Come," the elder said gently. "Tomorrow we will build a new village far from here."

Takomi stared at him, hysterical laughter bubbling painfully in the pit of his stomach. "Where in the world can we go?" he asked just before the second explosion hit.

THE END

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REVENGE FROM HELL

(Continued from page 36)

Kishmo paused to consider something. Even with his great magical forces, he knew he could not stand up to the entire company of white men. Bullets could not kill him for he was as immortal as the Great Spirit who had granted him his powers; but guns could cause intense pain. His memory flashed back to the time long ago when he was a young brave and had surprised a nest of hornets while hunting. They had swarmed and hurt him with their stingers. He had jumped into the lake to drive them away. White man's lead would cause the same pain, only there was no water that could make it stop.

But his smouldering eyes were still riveted on that dancing girl. She swayed and gyrated to the strange noises; she spun and twirled like the sunlight rippling across the surface of the lake on a still, windless day. Her eyes for a fraction of a second idly glanced out of the window straight at him. Kishmo did not draw back for he knew he was invisible to mortal sight and appeared only when he chose to.

Sliding his gnarled hand deep inside the bag of charms and potions tied securely to his leggings by a strong buckskin strap that would never feel the effects of time and weather, he pulled out a white powder wrapped in a piece of chamois. This was strong magic indeed, and Kishmo, for all his great power, handled the fine dust with a respect that only the ultimate, sacred things of the world can inspire.

He took a pinch between two massive fingers, leaned forward again, and gently blew the powder silently through the open window. Kishmo then rapidly recited the potent incantation that must follow or the charm would fail. The words, long unused, came quickly to his mind and each syllable was pronounced with the great intensity it deserved.



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ELLEN STOPPED dancing suddenly. She leaned her forehead on Dick's shoulder. He looked down at her worriedly.

"Is anything wrong?" he asked. "Are you sick?"

"No, nothing like that," came the dazed reply. "My eyes feel sort of tired and they burn. Must be the corn silk you hicks smoke instead of tobacco. I'll be all right in a minute. Hey, you don't have to go out with me. I'm quite sure I can find this place again." She smiled weakly and walked out of the church.

Her eyes hurt terribly and she couldn't understand why. There wasn't much smoke in the air, and besides, the ventilation was excellent. She wasn't tired in the least; and Ellen never had any real trouble with her vision before. But the gentle breeze soon cooled her smarting eyes. She sat on a log about fifty paces from the church.

"Was there ever such a night!" she exclaimed softly to herself. The moon was bright, enormous, and lighted up the entire landscape. To her left was the small town. But on her right, past the church, was the forest. This was the loveliest of all. Each leaf it seemed was heightened by the silvery glow so that it appeared distinct, separate from its neighbors. A few stars gleamed rather than twinkled through the slowly-waving foliage. The muted noise of the party, served only to enhance the still serenity of the woods.

Although never much of a nature lover, having in the past preferred sidewalks to pathless undergrowth, Ellen for some strange reason had an overwhelming desire to take a walk—alone, not far, but just long enough to clear her head of this weird heaviness. Smoothing down her quaint frock, she stood up and began moving in the direction of a stately fir tree, so ancient that it hardly had any needles left on its sweeping branches. But it was immense, quite the tallest object in sight, and Ellen found herself drawn to its primal beauty.

With a super-human leap, Kishmo bounded to the ground and raced like a deer to the far side of the fir tree. This was the very tree his ancestors had worshiped many generations ago, and he knew it would help him now. A tiny gurgle of satisfaction arose in his throat as he patted and felt the rough bark under his iron fingers. He sensed rather than saw the girl's approach and reaching once more

into his pouch, he drew forth the most powerful fetish of all. He could feel the strength of the charm even now as it lay dormant in his leathery palm, but once the proper words were spoken, it would explode into action, allowing no outside force, human or otherwise, to stop it. Only, he, only the great Kishmo, knew the spell to control its potency.

Ellen's eyes dreamily surveyed the ancient fir—until they stood shock still. She opened her mouth to scream. That thing, that creature standing before her—Kishmo! She tried again but no sound would come out. She started to back away as the humanoid approached her—but found she could no longer move. It was as if she were imbedded in a plastic balloon, could see but not feel or touch.

The thing stretched out his arm towards her and she was compelled to follow. Together they walked, neither of them making a sound as they moved through the fallen leaves and small plants that comprised the forest floor. They stopped, or rather Kishmo stopped and Ellen silently obeyed, by a small clearing about midway between the church and Martha's house. There the ancient brave turned himself first into a bear and then into a wolf as he howled his triumph over the white race. He tossed back his great, shaggy jaws and gave out another un-human yell of pleasure.

Ellen tried frantically to scramble away, but found that she was still encased in a supernatural force field. She watched with growing horror as the man-animal drew out a small, onion-shaped object from his pouch and spoke a few words in an outlandish tongue. A flash of light and she was able to move—but she couldn't for the creature had thrown her on the ground and begun to tear off her clothing. She struggled furiously but hadn't the power to fend off the lust-crazed savage. She screamed in agony as she felt white-hot pain. Kishmo had gotten his revenge on the invaders!

Too drained by the horror to move on her own, she now meekly followed the spirit into the night. He pointed silently to a small cave and Ellen paused at the entrance. She no longer cared what was to become of her.

"My father's rich," she told the demi-human, but received only a cold stare in return. "What do you want of me?" she then asked. Again, silence was her only an-

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swer, and perhaps only hope. "Am I going to be your slave? Answer me, damn it!" She demanded as despair gave her enough courage to lift her voice to the thing standing in front of her.

They went into the small cavern. There were animal skins on the floor, dried food stored high on a rough-hewn shelf, even a smoking oil lamp. Kishmo of course needed none of these things, but his intention had been to steal a white woman and make her pay the rest of her life for the cruelties her people had inflicted on his.

Ellen sank wearily on a pile of rank animal hide. "You're a ghost, aren't you?"

Kishmo silently nodded his great, shaggy head.

"And you can't really harm me—physically, I mean."

Another nod of the head.

"But you certainly can make love," Ellen paused for a moment's reflection. "Now that I think about it," remarked Ellen as she sat up and drew her legs under her, "you're the best lover I ever had. You know," she leaned forward confidentially, "I don't really dig living with my father. And I'm bored silly staying with Martha. I'd really much rather live with you—spirit or not. And to tell you the truth, I sort of enjoyed what you did to me before."

Kishmo stared at her quizzically. "Don't be so surprised. Look, Ghostie, it's a new age outside. Maybe you don't realize it, living here all alone, but people are different now. Make love to me again." She lay back obediently.

Kishmo hesitated.

"You heard me. MAKE LOVE TO ME THIS VERY INSTANT!" Ellen shouted. "Nobody asked you to kidnap me so now you're going to have to take care of me. Since you're a ghost, you've got all these groovy powers. Now I don't have to do any more work ever again. Come over here."

Kishmo obeyed.

"Make love to me."

He did.

"Ah, Kishmo," Ellen murmured as she lay comfortably in his hairy arms, "you're pretty damn good. But," she raised herself on her elbows, "this place like really stinks. When was the last time you cleaned up? Look at all these animal bones and things lying around. You should be ashamed of yourself living like a pig. Clean it up and take out all this smelly garbage. And after that, feed me. I think I could just about manage a

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whole ox right now."

Kishmo hurriedly searched in his magic pouch for the amulet that would make the cave clean again. But there was nothing. He could raise the dead, cause a flood or hurricane, destroy crops with one blast. But clean a house?

"Well, what are you waiting for? Luckily for you I decided I like you—you're a lot more fun than those dippy college boys I keep getting stuck with and I think I'll stay with you for ever and ever." She stretched her arms over her head and yawned. "You can pile the bones in a neat bundle outside the door. Get me some cloth and I'll sew some curtains for the door. Gee," she said to herself, "this is a lot of fun. We'll need some electricity and of course a TV set. And then there's running water and . . . what?" she said, interrupting her pleasant monologue, "are you still here? You deaf or something? I distinctly gave you an order. Take out all this crap that's lying around. And get me some real food, DAMN IT!"

Once again the dread Kishmo, the scourge of the white man's world, went out to terrorize and pillage. He had gotten his cowering pale captive. But instead of seeking eternal vengeance, his goal was a hamburger and a chocolate malted.

THE END

WANTED MY HEART

(Continued from page 8)

bright and clear and—and tragic."

"It's just an illusion, Tom. I've never seen her myself, but I do know several folks who have. Or at least have claimed to. A couple of years ago an artist friend of mine went out there to investigate. He said it was just a case of shadows falling on the road. When you move toward them, they take shape for a second, then break up into shadows again. But enough of this—you must be dying to have a look around. You've never been here before."

We finished breakfast and Uncle Edvard took me on a tour of Hadley. I had lived in large cities all my life, and to see a small town, and more importantly, to know that I was a part of it, was an unusual event. We walked up Main St., sat for a while in the drugstore directly opposite the neat little park in front of the prim, whitewashed church, then went to see the new hospital just completed. In spite of

myself, I was impressed by the town, the people, and my uncle's contributions to both.

The next few weeks passed by quickly. Uncle Edvard left for Florida after the entire town of Hadley and most of Dusenbergh threw him a touching farewell party. I moved into my new home and made many friends in the neighborhood and at the hospital. My work kept me quite busy, but it was good to be finally on my own after so many years spent as a student. In my spare moments I played squash at the local high school gym to keep myself fit, read voraciously anything I could get my hands on, drew up plans for a small flower garden to be planted in the spring, and did some pottering around the house. Nothing unusual at all happened to me, except that for the first time in my life I was really happy.

At eight o'clock one night the phone rang. An old woman in Dusenbergh was rather sick and wanted to see me. I put on my coat, grabbed my medical bag, hopped in the car and drove down. It was an intensely black night, for massive clouds hid all the stars. And of course there were no lights on the road. I remember imagining as I drove what this place would look like in the summer and if the nights would be quite as dark.

I pulled into the pebbled driveway and crunched my way to the house. It was a large, Victorian job with plenty of gingerbread on all the exposed timbers. Just as I was about to climb the last step, the door opened and an ancient man, half doubled over by rheumatism, ushered me into the parlor.

"Miss Cranshaw is very ill, sir," he murmured, "and I am quite worried about her. If you would please follow me."

He led me up the stairs, but at the landing I paused shock still, my eyes glued to the wall.

"Hurry, sir," the old man called, looking down at me from the half dozen steps that now separated us. "We haven't time."

I went up and attended the old woman. A quick glance told me she was healthy, just suffering from a slight cold. I gave her a sedative to help her sleep, and told Henry, the retainer, not to worry.

"Just a touch of old age," I said once we had left the sickroom. "Give her these drops I've prescribed and she'll be fine." We began walking down the carpeted stairs.

Once again my sight was arr-



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ted on the landing.

"Henry, who is this woman?" I asked, trying to keep my voice steady. I would recognize those terrified eyes anywhere.

"Miss Cranshaw's eldest sister, Amanda, sir. She died many years ago in an accident. Miss Cranshaw was very much attached to her and refused to allow the painting to be removed. But it's all ancient history, sir," Henry smiled sadly.

He showed me to the door and thanked me again. I turned up the collar of my coat, for it was snowing quite heavily, and walked to the car, climbed in and put the key into the ignition. But the engine wouldn't kick over. I tried again and again, but no luck.

"It's probably the fuel pump," I said to Henry who had come out after hearing the noise. "I knew I should have gotten a new one."

"No matter, sir," the servant said kindly. "You can stay here for the night. If there's one thing we've got, it's spare rooms. You can have the car fixed in the morning."

Again I followed the old man into the house. He offered me a cup of tea and I accepted. While we were having it in the huge, warm kitchen, I tried to pump Henry for more information on Amanda.

"This all happened years before I came here, sir, and I know very little about her. She died when Miss Cranshaw was about seven. Let's see. That would be in..." he tilted his head thoughtfully, "in 1901, I believe."

"If that painting is any indication, she must have been beautiful."

"I've seen photographs of Amanda, sir. And she was a lovely girl. Lovely."

"But how did she die?"

"A carriage accident. She was driving home alone one night when the axel broke. Amanda was killed instantly when she was thrown from the vehicle."

"Near the copse of oak trees," I murmured, half to myself.

"What's that—how did you know, sir?" Henry asked quickly. Then just as rapidly, "Ah, you've seen her. Quite a few people have. But everyone keeps insisting it is just a cast shadow, and Miss Cranshaw insists loudest of all. Don't say anything to her, sir."

I smiled. "Of course not, Henry. It must be very painful for her."

"Oh, it is, sir. Very. But it is getting late," he said, putting both hands on the table and slowly easing himself up into a standing po-

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sition. And you must be tired. Let me show you to your chamber."

I went with him to a spacious bedroom on the first floor. It was furnished in heavy, carved mahogany, perhaps too cumbersome for modern taste, but still very elegant. And the wall coverings were pure, rose silk. There was a row of French windows set in the wall opposite the door, hung with heavy curtains to block out the cold night air.

"Her room, sir," Henry murmured as he wished me goodnight and closed the door.

I undressed and got into bed. But I was too tired to sleep. Thoughts kept racing through my brain as I continually went over what had happened that night. I heard the clock in the parlor chime three o'clock. Then came fitful periods of half-sleep where I would wake every fifteen minutes. Finally drowsiness overcame me and I fell into a deep slumber.

I AWOKE with a start. The room was cold—ice cold. I had never felt such a freezing sensation before in all my life. Damp, incredibly heavy, cold. I turned my head to the row of windows—and gave an involuntary gasp! There, standing not twenty feet away from me was the indistinct figure of a woman crouching in the shadowy folds of a floor-length curtain. My heart pounding, I frantically tried to remember everything I knew about apparitions.

"They can't harm you; there're only illusions; they are frightened of mortals; they flee from the dawn," ran steadily through my mind. But I was terrified.

The curtain parted for a moment as the figure moved slightly. I could hear the rustle of silk.

I clutched the bedclothes with both sweating hands. "Amanda," I whispered, "I'm frightened of you. I'm so scared I could faint. But I know what happened to you and I'm sorry."

The spectre moved and stepped into the room. It was Amanda, only more beautiful than any painting. I turned to put on a light, but by a gesture she stopped me.

She came closer. Her gentle but incredibly sorrowful face told me I had nothing to fear from her.

"Amanda," I again whispered, "my name is Tom. I saw you on the road a few weeks ago. You were running toward me and I nearly hit you with the car."

She winced as if suffering a physical

blow.

"Don't—I'm sorry. I shouldn't have mentioned it. Now I know. Come closer. I'm not afraid of you any longer."

She approached the bed and I experienced a not unpleasant feeling of static electricity surround me. From a nearer view, her eyes were enormous, deep, yearning. I longed to take her in my arms and comfort her, to make everything all right again.

She sensed my thoughts and sadly shook her head. There was no hope for her. She walked nearer and took my hand. An unearthly feeling—her hand in mine seemed to vibrate with soft undulations like holding a detached, beating heart in my palm. But it was no human touch because I soon realized if I closed my hand, my fingers would meet with nothing in between them.

She leaned toward me and with a calm and trusting look, glanced into my face. I could feel her eyes searching and going down to the very depths of my soul. Still holding my hand, she sat down beside me. Only the slightest pressure, and that probably imagined, disturbed the solidity of the mattress. She half-smiled at me, not for an instant freeing me from her glance.

It was then that I knew I loved her.

I could look through her as I could a piece of cloudy glass. The half-disclosed window looked out into the universe. Already bands of a lighter hue were streaking across the night-blue heavens. We both knew she had to leave before dawn cleft the skies. She arose gracefully.

"Where?" I asked and pleaded at the same time, but I already knew. She departed after kissing the tips of her fingers and placing them on my forehead. Amanda glided back into the corner and sunk into the shadows of curtains that were becoming more and more distinct.

Each day I wait, and each day my love becomes clearer, brighter, purer. We meet by the copse of oaks in the dead of a winter's night and walk down the lonely road together. I speak and she answers with her eyes, still sorrowful but tragic no longer. No one knows of our love; no one would believe that love transcends even death itself. We sit. We wait for the time I'll be able to join Amanda for ever and always.

THE END